



*Photographed by Zambühl & Gross, St. Gall*

# THE CROWD IN PEACE AND WAR

BY  
SIR MARTIN CONWAY

Nullum esse librum tam malum  
ut non ex aliquâ parte prodesset.

*Pliny the Elder*

LONGMANS, GREEN AND CO.  
39 PATERNOSTER ROW, LONDON  
FOURTH AVENUE & 30TH STREET, NEW YORK  
BOMBAY, CALCUTTA, AND MADRAS  
1915

COPYRIGHT, 1915, BY  
LONGMANS, GREEN, AND CO.

M. M.

SOCERO DILECTO  
CONSILII LUCULENTI MEMOR  
ET GRATISSIMUS  
M. C.



# CONTENTS

CHAPTER	PAGE
I. KINDS OF CROWDS . . . . .	3
II. THE NATURE OF CROWDS . . . . .	25
III. CROWD-UNITS . . . . .	39 -
IV. CROWD-CONTINUITY . . . . .	57
V. CROWD-INSTINCTS . . . . .	70 -
VI. CROWD-COMPELLERS . . . . .	88
VII. CROWD-EXPONENTS . . . . .	101
VIII. CROWD-REPRESENTATIVES . . . . .	114
IX. CROWD-ORGANISATION . . . . .	127
X. GOVERNMENT AND THE CROWD . . . . .	137
XI. LIBERTY AND FREEDOM . . . . .	166
XII. EDUCATION . . . . .	182
XIII. MORALS . . . . .	193 -
XIV. RELIGION . . . . .	213
XV. OVERCROWDS . . . . .	242
XVI. WAR: ITS CAUSE AND CURE . . . . .	265
XVII. THE CONTEST OF IDEALS . . . . .	285
XVIII. THE CROWD AT WAR . . . . .	298
XIX. THE VALUE OF THE CROWD . . . . .	307 -
XX. THE JUST MEAN . . . . .	318

# THE CROWD IN PEACE AND WAR

# The Crowd in Peace and War

## CHAPTER I

### KINDS OF CROWDS

MAN has never decided whether to be a gregarious animal or not. Individualism and socialism attract him alternately. He swings like a pendulum from the one to the other. At times he merges himself completely in some group or crowd and loses his identity there like a sheep in a flock. Then he lives and moves and has his being in the crowd. He follows its routine; *esprit de corps* determines his ideals and dictates his emotions. He is like a soldier in a regiment, or a cell in living tissue: a mere unit whose life, joy, and passion it is to contribute his portion of vitality and power to the larger life of the whole group, or as our brave soldiers say, "to do his bit."

At other times man adopts the attitude of complete detachment from his fellows, like Thoreau at Walden, or a Theban hermit in his desert cave. The crowd then is nothing to him. His aim is to be self-sufficing — to think his own thoughts, go his own ways, provide for his own needs, and perhaps save his own soul. He no longer resembles a sheep in a flock or a wolf in a pack, but re-

# The Crowd in Peace and War

mains aloof, like some lonely condor circling in the blue, with even the high Andes far beneath him, and his nearest fellow, visible only to vision keen as his, likewise isolated miles away in the depths of the air.

Much has in recent years been written about the Crowd and its psychology, yet for the most part from quite restricted points of view, as if the only Crowds to be considered were but two, — the Mob and the Public: the Mob as any disorganised or weakly organised assemblage of people; the Public as what we all know and need not define, the general body of inhabitants of a given area organised mostly by newspapers. Yet there are many other crowds to which an individual may belong beside these two, and it may serve to clear the ground if we consider a few of them briefly.

To begin with there are what we ordinarily designate as crowds: that is to say assemblages of human beings, all physically present together at one time and within one area, each individual conscious of the presence of the next. A mob is the least admired form of such a crowd, the term usually implying not merely the simultaneous presence of a number of people, but that their behaviour is more or less disorderly. A public meeting is usually a well-behaved crowd, but may at any time degenerate into a mob; it is to a large extent a chance assembly of people who have never come together in their entirety before and will never assemble again, the link between them being therefore felt to be of a transitory kind. A theatre audience is of like character in constitution, but differs from a public meeting in that it assembles for another end and knows what it expects to

## Kinds of Crowds

experience. Different again is a congregation and on a higher plane both of organisation and purpose; whilst a regiment on parade is likewise and obviously another and more elaborately organised assemblage.

More important for the purposes of our present scrutiny are the groups of human beings not physically assembled together within sight and hearing of one another at any time and place, yet forming collective bodies which have a separate and conscious existence. Them also, for brevity and convenience' sake, one may likewise designate as crowds. Such are the Race, the Empire, the Nation, each possessing consciousness of a separate existence and an internal unity. Even the English-speaking race, vaguely definable though it be, really exists as a true crowd and knows that it has a certain separate life apart from the other races that fill the world. Its life is no doubt a very low form, its self-consciousness weak, but if it realised that an attempt were being made by any other race to supplant it, it would defend its existence with vigour. Some Empires are more self-conscious because more highly organised than others, but even one whose organisation is as rudimentary as that of Great Britain is capable of manifesting amazing crowd-life when attacked — a statement which to-day needs no emphasis. The next geographically limited crowd-unit is the Nation, which, though it may include elements of various races, is yet more vital and more self-conscious, because more highly organised, than they can be. Nations, in fact, are the largest organised crowds that exist. It is an exception to find an individual citizen of any nation whose citizenship is not a strong element in his

# The Crowd in Peace and War

individual character and a determining factor in many of the most important actions of his life. Every citizen of a nation carries the national type about with him. It has been wittily said of the insular Briton that "every Englishman is an island." Mr. Justice Darling retorted that "every American is a continent." The national character finds queer ways of expressing itself in some individuals, but in almost all it is at any rate present in the form called Patriotism. Patriotism is the emotion of his national crowd in the heart of the individual citizen.

Besides, or rather contained within, a nation are many smaller crowds geographically defined. The people of a county are a crowd; more consciously are those of a city or town. The inhabitants of a village or parish often feel themselves to be a separate crowd with a crowd-life and consciousness of their own. Further divisions and sub-divisions might be catalogued, but let the foregoing suffice, not for definition but for illustration.

A geographical limitation is only one of the possible circumscriptions of a crowd. The most notable organised crowds within a nation are political parties, and their life is full of vigour, though they are not geographically defined. Classes are likewise crowds, some more self-conscious than others, but all to some extent possessed of the elements of a separate being. "Labour" nowadays has become keenly conscious of its separate crowd-life; "Society" is likewise thus conscious, but less keenly. The various professions have a crowd-life more or less self-conscious. Medical practitioners, for instance, form a group with a strong independent life and a high internal organisation. The body of lawyers is only a little less

## Kinds of Crowds

vigorous in its group-life than the body of medical men, and other professions congregate apart in a descending order of vitality. It is possible or even probable that two rat-catchers, otherwise strangers, might feel themselves linked by a bond which would stand some slight strain if the occasion arose to put it to the test.

Ecclesiastical and religious bodies of all kinds are crowds, often highly organised and keenly conscious of their separate existence. The sub-divisions of a Church, the High Churchmen, the Evangelicals, and so forth, are no less alive, and parishes have a vitality of their own which is not the same as that of a given congregation at any moment assembled for worship. Clubs and Societies are crowds, sometimes loosely organised and scarcely conscious at all, sometimes highly organised and keenly self-conscious. More vigorous than most in their crowd-consciousness are the educational organisations: schools, colleges, universities, the actual members of which in the heyday of their career are perhaps more sensible of their membership of the collective body to which they belong than of any other circumstance of their existence.

Most highly organised of all is a disciplined regiment of soldiers (not merely when on parade), which is constructed, drilled, and in every detail of life ordained to the end that the unit may be completely merged in the whole and, as far as can possibly be attained, may lose all individual will, feeling, fear, or independence, and become one in act, in thought, and above all things in emotion — in what we call *esprit de corps* — with the body of which he for the time being forms a part.

These and the like aggregations of men possess the

# The Crowd in Peace and War

crowd quality, but we regard them with different degrees of admiration or sympathy. It is with human crowds as with groups of animals; some are regarded as superior to others. Thus, for instance, what we think of a hive of bees, a flock of sheep, a pack of wolves, is shown by the way we use the same terms when applied to men. We speak of a "hive of industry," of a Parson and his "flock," of a "pack of fools," thereby indicating admiration of the bees, sympathy for the sheep, and contempt for the wolves. So the word "Mob" implies contempt and hatred of the thing, and for other groups we have different grades of esteem. It will be found that the measure of those grades depends not so much on the degree of organisation of the crowd as on the ideal by which it is animated.

A multitude of people walking in the street, each about his own business, may form a dense mass of humanity, but they are not a crowd until something occurs to arrest their common attention and inspire in them a common emotion. Any sudden danger or startling event suffices to bring them into the first rudimentary crowd-relation with one another. A horse falls and people gather round; a couple of vehicles collide and a more interested crowd collects; a house catches fire and the neighbourhood is filled with an excited throng. Such crowds, till the police take them in hand, are altogether disorganised, and rapidly degenerate into mobs. That fact is so well realised that the police have been trained in every country as rudimentary crowd-organisers, and do the work almost as well as it can be done, on the spur of the moment. These chance assemblages, collected by any



## Kinds of Crowds

accident, do not, however, long remain passive if events of interest confront them. In the case of a fire, for instance, something is sure to occur that will kindle their passions. The mere event excites them. Soon they become vocal. By shouting they further excite one another. They are sure to be warmly sympathetic; they will cheer the smallest act of courage; they will also be profoundly sentimental, as is shown for example if women or children are imperilled. There is no present need to elaborate what every one knows.

A band of music is the easiest of all agencies, not merely for bringing a crowd together but for kindling the emotion that provides it at once with a rudimentary structure and a common emotion. Men marching behind a band in rhythmic step are already beginning to crystallize into an integral group. They feel as one and move as one so long as the music holds them. Hence the efficiency of a band as a military recruiting agency and a stimulus to the regiment when formed. A band, says Mr. Kipling, "revives memories and quickens associations; it opens and unites the hearts of men more surely than any other appeal . . . A wise and sympathetic bandmaster . . . can lift a battalion out of depression, cheer its sickness, and steady and recall it to itself in times of almost unendurable strain."

Religious revivalists long ago realised the value of music as an aid to their propaganda. Years ago Moody and Sankey made music an important part of their spectacular assemblies. Later came Torrey and Alexander, likewise from America, and this is what one of them said to a "Daily Mail" reporter. "There has never been a

# The Crowd in Peace and War

“great revival without music. Hymns prepare the  
“ground for the exhortation of the preacher. Business  
“men come to the meetings full of their worries and  
“cares, and in no state of mind to derive the fullest bene-  
“fit from spoken lessons and advice. A swinging hymn  
“makes them forget all their troubles. Half an hour  
“of bright revival hymns kneads the congregation into  
“one body. It is possible to end the musical part of the  
“service too early, and it is always my aim to get every  
“member of the congregation to sing before the hymns  
“are finished. . . . Unanimous congregational singing is  
“of the utmost value in a revival.” The arts of crowd-  
management could scarcely be better illustrated.

The oldest and still the most powerful crowd-former is the orator; that in fact is the purpose for which oratory exists. It was formed in the presence of crowds and developed by the reaction of crowd and speaker on one another. A man with an oratorical gift can swiftly convert a chance assemblage into a crowd. We see this accomplished not infrequently in the public streets. A speaker stands at some corner and begins his harangue. At first he is like a fallen cab-horse; a few folk stop out of idle curiosity rather to look at him than to listen. He says something that catches their attention, and they lose the listless attitude of the mere loafer. Others are thereby attracted to join them. The speaker begins to take hold of them. He makes them laugh; he draws forth their applause. They become the centre of a continually widening assembly. At first the speaker's ideas are nothing to them. Presently they become interested; before long they are taken captive. The orator mesmer-

## Kinds of Crowds

ises rather than convinces them. They shout applause and their enthusiasm is kindled. They become a group with an idea, and in the heat of that emotion they may be led to act in a remarkable manner, as the individuals composing the group could never have been brought to act had they been reasoned with, one by one, by ever so many separate archangels.

Evangelistic revival meetings present these phenomena in a well-recognised form. Here, for instance, is a cutting from a recent American newspaper, describing the feats of "Billy" Sunday. "Philadelphia, Jan. 24, 1915. "All records for a day's quota of trail-blitters were broken "to-day when 1,445 men, among them ex-Sheriff David "Baird, the old Republican boss of Camden, walked up "the sawdust-covered aisles of the Tabernacle, at Nine-"teenth and Vine Streets, took Billy Sunday by the hand "and told him that they accepted Christ as their Saviour. "Never in nearly twenty years of evangelism has he "accomplished such results as these in a single day. Five "hundred and twenty-three were converted at the night "service after the most spectacular platform performance "to which the evangelist has treated Philadelphia since "his arrival in the city."

The audiences at such meetings are brought together as a crowd that watches a fire is formed, by the mere desire to be present at an event. They come to see something happen. The spell-binder gets hold of them, just as a mesmerist attracts examples from his audience, and causes them to provide the very sight they came to see.

It is sometimes easy to note the moment when a chance

# The Crowd in Peace and War

assembly becomes an integral crowd, possessed by a common emotion which swamps and obliterates the individual mind. Thus, for instance, I myself was present a good many years ago in the smoking-room of an Atlantic liner, when the usual daily auction-sale was taking place of the numbers drawn for the pool on the count of miles run in the current twenty-four hours. It was the first day out, and the smoking-room assemblage had scarcely begun to be conscious of itself. The auctioneer was not very eloquent and sales were slow; bids of from £1 to £2 were obtained with difficulty. Several numbers had been thus sold and the next in order was offered. There was nothing special in the nature of the chances to make it more desirable than its predecessors, but for some obscure reason the room woke up. Something was said by the auctioneer that raised a laugh; some repartee came from the room. A wave of emotion swept through the men present; they suddenly became a crowd. Bids followed one another in rapid succession. An atmosphere of excitement and speculation was created, and the number was knocked down for £52, when its despised predecessor had fetched but thirty shillings. Frequenters of other kinds of auctions could recall similar experiences. Prices are as often determined by mere crowd-enthusiasm as by the cold value of the things disposed of.

A great deal of art may be employed by the managers of a public assembly to induce, in the people present, the kind of sudden overwhelming enthusiasm of which large bodies of men are capable, such enthusiasm, however created, being afterwards a valuable asset to a movement, and often, as we shall hereafter see, leaving permanent

## Kinds of Crowds

traces upon the individuals who were affected by it. Let me cite an illustration from the United States — the country *par excellence* of crowds. Perhaps the most remarkable American crowds present at one time in the flesh, whose doings are carefully put on record, are the great Conventions of the two chief political parties, which assemble once every four years to nominate a candidate for the Presidency and perform various other functions. Such a convention was that of the Democratic Party, which assembled in Kansas City in the early days of July, 1900, and nominated Mr. Bryan. I select it because I was interested at the time in its behaviour and preserved the records which now lie before me. I select merely one incident therefrom to illustrate how a crowd's enthusiasm may be organised by wily leaders. The moment came when the report of the Committee on Platform was to be read. The Platform to be thus presented was that upon which the party were to appeal to the country, and, of course, it was the purpose of such a document to arouse enthusiasm. Senator James K. Jones of Arkansas was Chairman of the Committee and should in the ordinary course have read the report to the Convention.

"Senator Jones has," said the reporter of the New York "Sun," "a very sturdy voice himself, but he announced that Senator "Ben Tillman would read the committee's report. Senator "Tillman has a voice like a wagon running over a corduroy road. "He seemed to have committed that report to memory. He "certainly delivered it in splendid fashion. He made every "possible point tell. When Senator Tillman came to the words "that 'Imperialism is the paramount issue of this campaign,' "there were only a few cheers. Senator Tillman looked up sur-

# The Crowd in Peace and War

"prised. Then he turned to Chairman Richardson and then to "Senator Jones. Then he looked at Sergeant-at-Arms John S. "Martin. Something was amiss. Something had gone wrong. "Mr. Martin waved his arms in his excitement. He weighs "300 pounds. He jumped down from his perch on the platform "on to the gangway running before the platform and danced "about in anger. The ushers and messengers were quickly "around him. There was a hurried confabulation and Mr. "Martin swung his head and his arms back towards Senator "Tillman upon the platform. The messengers and ushers "darted here and there among the delegates and a hundred of "other messengers and ushers rushed up into the galleries. All "were loaded with American flags. They quietly distributed "these flags among the delegates and the audience. In a jiffy "Mr. Martin waved his arms up at the band and it quickly came "out with the 'Star Spangled Banner.' Even then there was "no demonstration. Senator Tillman turned full face to the "audience and roared with all his might, 'I say again that Im- "perialism is the paramount issue of this campaign.' The band, "which had halted a moment, came out again with the 'Star "Spangled Banner.' The delegates and the audience unfolded "their flags. A great flag which was hung from the steel trusses "of the convention hall just over the platform was dropped. "This was the legend upon it: 'The Constitution and the "flag, one and inseparable, now and forever; the flag of the "republic forever, of an empire never.'

"Then came one of the greatest scenes that this convention "has had. Upon all the little flags which the hundreds of mes- "sengers and ushers had distributed were printed the exact "words on the big flag which had been let down from the trusses. "The audience roared with enthusiasm. The delegates grasped "their standards and swung them over their heads. Half a "dozen banners were waved in the air. One of them read: " 'Lincoln abolished slavery under the flag. McKinley restored

## Kinds of Crowds

“ ‘it.’ Another read: ‘What would Christ do in the Philippines?’  
“And still another read: ‘No man is good enough to govern  
“ ‘another man without his consent. A. Lincoln.’ Amid the  
“tumultuous cheers the band was heard playing ‘There’ll Be a  
“ ‘Hot Time in the Old Town to-night.’ The delegates began to  
“carry their standards around the hall. The flags, thousands  
“upon thousands of them, were waving, and it was a vast scene  
“of colour. The cheers were riotous. High above them could  
“be heard the rebel yell, ‘Hi, hi, hi, hi, ki, ki, ki!’ The Boer  
“flag was brought out and toted around the hall, and the band  
“played America’s greatest national anthem, ‘My Country,  
“ ‘tis of Thee,’ which, as all know, from time immemorial has  
“been set to the music of ‘God Save the Queen.’ It was a wild  
“scene. It was a pathetic scene to some who had observed  
“closely the fact that this was a cut-and-dried affair, which had  
“come almost near failure. It was not a spontaneous outburst  
“for the flag. It had been worked up by the managers of this  
“convention. The demonstration lasted twelve minutes. Many  
“who saw it will never forget it.”

A crowd, in the sense in which I am employing the word, can be formed in a hundred other ways than by mere physical presence together at one time and place. Printing, the telegraph, and the various modern inventions and developments we are all familiar with, have made crowd-formation possible without personal contact, as they have also made the gathering together of an actual assembly far more easy to accomplish than it was when the best form of advertisement was the town-crier. What is a “movement” but the formation of a crowd? Public meetings and the like agencies may be employed to initiate it, but in the main it is not by meetings but by the printed word that the movement is spread and

# The Crowd in Peace and War

the crowd of its adherents enlisted. Nowadays we are all of us crowd-assailed at any hour and in all places. Clubs, associations, organisations for every purpose ceaselessly call upon each to join. "Come unto us and we with you will be potent; come unto us and share our emotion; come unto us and accomplish together some heart's desire." Every newspaper, every magazine, innumerable agencies intrude upon the individual and would swallow him up, would capture his life into that of their larger composite, would make of his voice a trumpet for their own creed or aspiration. What indeed are newspapers but crowd-formers, and the habitual readers of a newspaper but a crowd? Newspapers indeed are read by individuals, just as individual ears hear the voice of an orator, but they are not addressed to individuals, nor does a reader read them in the same attitude of mind as when he reads a private letter. A newspaper reader is conscious of his crowd as he reads; he is a Tory or a Liberal or whatnot, and it is as such that he is addressed and as such that he reads. A newspaper is as much conceived and produced for a crowd as is any orator's harangue. The story is told how an old journalist said to a young one, "Remember when you are writing for your paper that you are like a man shouting from a fourth-floor window to a crowd passing in the street." The purpose of journalism is, in fact, crowd-formation and crowd-direction, and though journals incidentally serve the needs of individuals in many minor ways, they do not exist for the individual but for some crowd which it is their aim to direct.

Religion has been a potent crowd-forming agency. The



## Kinds of Crowds

most remarkable example in the world's history is the religion of Islam. It was born in the heart and brain of Mahommed, and within a hundred years after the Flight it had welded its adherents into a victorious host, which, sweeping forth from the sparsely-peopled deserts of Arabia, had conquered and held Syria, Mesopotamia, Persia, Egypt, North Africa, and Spain. In our own day the followers of that quaint prophetess, Mrs. Eddy, are already counted by millions, and though they have not gone forth conquering and to conquer, it is certain that they are a powerful body. The philosophy of the notorious Treitschke within the lifetime of a generation has remade the German people on a new model and threatened the whole basis of European civilisation; had it not been for the power of organising resistance quickly and over a large area, provided by modern means of intercourse and communication, we might have witnessed at the present moment a German repetition of the successes of conquering Islam. The German-Turkish alliance is not so surprising as seems to have been generally thought, for Islam and Teutonism have much in common.

A new political theory is scarcely less efficient as a crowd-former. Who could have supposed when Carlyle, Ruskin, Kingsley, and a few others began their onslaught upon the "Condition of England" that within little more than half a century the axis of politics would have been shifted so completely as it has been in consequence of the new ideas to which they gave expression? The Labour Party in England to-day perhaps owes more to the writings of Ruskin than to any other impulse. After the election of 1905, when numerous Labour Members obtained entry

# The Crowd in Peace and War

into the House of Commons, a newspaper had the good idea to inquire of them what books read by them had had any considerable effect on them. Many replied that their reading was mainly confined to newspapers, but a large proportion also stated that they had read Ruskin's "Time and Tide" and dated much of their activity from that reading.

Philanthropic movements can form large and efficient crowds, as was seen for example in the anti-slavery agitation. The temperance movement has produced vigorous crowds, and so on a smaller scale have such agitations as those which protest against vaccination, typhoid-innoculation, vivisection, and so forth. These and other like movements avail themselves of public meetings for their propaganda, but the crowds they form and by which they exist are mainly collected by means of the newspaper press. Orators provide the nucleus, but it is the press that builds up the crowd and cements its organisation.

In that "dark backward and abysm of time," when palæolithic man alone foreshadowed the human race which was to come, it is safe to assert that there were no crowds or only very small and rudimentary ones. Palæolithic man was a hunter or a root digger. His awkward flint weapons were useful only at arm's length. He must have lain in wait for his prey, silently in secret places. Probably each family supplied its own needs and lived apart; but a family is not a crowd and possesses none of the qualities and peculiarities of a crowd. Assertions on unrecorded happenings in so remote a past are vain, but we can at least imagine a strong probability

## Kinds of Crowds

that individualism was never more pronounced than in the earliest stages of human development.

When, however, we come to neolithic man we are evidently in the presence of crowds. Neolithic man lived in communities, had invented agriculture, and had subjugated a certain number of domestic animals. The palæolithic family was replaced by the neolithic tribe. If Adam and Eve before the Fall were palæolithic individuals, the Tree of Knowledge which caused them to till the ground turned them into social units. Thenceforward the internal struggle went on, between man the individual and man the crowd-unit, which has lasted down to the present day and will continue until civilisation atrophies. It is in this rivalry between individual instincts and social claims that sin finds its origin, so that a profound truth underlies the legend of the birth of sin accompanying the introduction of agriculture in consequence of eating the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge.

An important element in the forces that promote crowd-formation is the attractiveness of a crowd for the individual. The ordinary man is as inevitably drawn toward a crowd as a needle toward a magnet. When Pickwick was being carried to the magistrate's house, accompanied by a shouting crowd, Sam Weller "stepped aside to see "the crowd pass, and finding that they were cheering "away, very much to their own satisfaction, forthwith "began to cheer too, with all his might and main," being of course entirely ignorant of his master's predicament or the cause of the cheering. The moment a number of people are seen to be assembling in a street for any or no visible reason, others will run to join them, and the larger

# The Crowd in Peace and War

the crowd the more powerful the attraction it exercises. The mere expectation that any announced meeting will be large tends to make it so. The knowledge that a movement is growing tends to increase its growth. Why do newspapers announce the extent of their circulation? It is because their audience is a crowd and attracts others to itself the more powerfully the larger it is said to be. Enthusiasm has a tendency to spread and a crowd is the agency, a larger crowd the result, of such spreading. A large school, a large university, is more attractive to most students than a small one. The smaller body may even provide a better education, but the larger invests its members with a greater corporate pride. Attractiveness is, in fact, an element of vitality possessed by all crowds.

I cut from an American newspaper (the "Tribune," I believe) an excellent story about the behaviour on a certain occasion of the boys in a school chapel. It illustrates the ease with which a crowd of lads accustomed to a common life can be moved to act as a unit by even a slight common impulse. The preacher, on the occasion in question, "was not of the sturdy sort that college men "take to at the first glance, and he had a lisp in his voice "that the audience tried politely to forget. Although "he did not have a particularly strong sermon, it would "have 'passed by,' in campus language, if he had not "chosen some particularly childish stories with which to "illustrate his text. During the rendition of these the "undergraduates grew more and more restless, until the "climax came. He finished his sermon with the point "that 'weak human beings have to be assisted to climb "'the "ladder of life,"' a point that would not have had

## Kinds of Crowds

“the effect on the audience that it did had it not been accompanied by the illustration. This illustration was of a boy whom the preacher named ‘Willie,’ which was enough to focus all the eyes in the chapel on him at once. “‘Willie,’ said the preacher, ‘had to climb the stairs to get a paper of pins for mamma, and mamma was at the bottom of the stairs to encourage him. “Now, Willie,” said mamma, “you go up the stairs and mamma will count for you.””

- “The undergraduates squirmed in their seats at this, and looked at each other out of the corners of their eyes. ““Now, Willie,” said mamma, “count the steps. One — two — three,” and Willie counted “One — two — three.”’ ‘Four — five’ — The students had caught Willie’s enthusiasm by this time, and began to count with the preacher, half audibly at first, and then, as the spirit of the thing took them, louder and louder — ‘Four — five — six!’ In less time than it takes to tell it the twelve hundred undergraduates were counting with the preacher, who, although decidedly aghast at the commotion he had caused, had to continue. ‘Eight — nine — ten!’ at the end of which the preacher in unison with the entire chapel said, ‘And Willie — got — the — pins!’”

What is the minimum number of individuals that can form a crowd? It is not an unimportant question, seeing that individuals and crowds act on quite different motives, individuals being directed in the main by reason, crowds by emotion. Is a Jury, for instance, a crowd or a mere group of individuals? Is a Cabinet a crowd? These are questions of importance, for they lie at the root of

# The Crowd in Peace and War

modern systems of law and government. An essential quality of an embodied crowd I take to be that its numbers are too large for general conversation to be possible. As soon as such a group comes under the control of an orator it is a crowd. The essence of conversation is interruption, the power and right of an individual to break in upon another's monologue. Conversation is essentially a process of give and take. Its life is gone the moment one individual takes the floor and silences the rest. I believe it was the poet Rogers who wittily said that the number at a dinner party should be less than the Muses and more than the Graces. Where more than nine people are assembled about a table the danger of crowd-formation arises. Three or less are not a party at all. It is possible for each of a party of nine to retain a definite consciousness of the separate personalities and characters of the other eight, and to address his remarks to each with a personal quality in what he says, but few will be able to retain such consciousness of a larger number; the moment the speaker loses that consciousness of each person's individuality he will find himself either talking to his neighbour privately or addressing the table as if it were a meeting. Some torrential talkers treat their audience always as if it were an assemblage. Such was the late Mr. Gladstone. For him a single individual might seem to be a crowd. "He talks to me," said Queen Victoria, "as though I were a public meeting." As a matter of fact a sovereign is a kind of crowd, or should be, as we shall hereafter note; but Queen Victoria was the last person to realise this.

Experience proves that a Jury of twelve does in fact

## Kinds of Crowds

act as a crowd, and it is probable that that number has been in process of time arrived at because it is the minimum number that can be normally relied upon so to act. As a rule the general feeling among a dozen men suffices to carry them all along together to a common conclusion. Now and again a sturdy individualist may turn up amongst the dozen and the result be disagreement, but such occasions are exceptional.

A modern English Cabinet is likewise certainly a crowd, though the small governing committees of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries out of which it has been developed were not. Hence in our day has arisen that new and quite unconstitutional feature, the inner Cabinet, of whose structure and doings the public is fortunately so little informed. Executive Committees, whether for the government of a nation or of a cricket club, can never in fact be crowds, or, if they are, they cease to be executive. A large committee is of necessity inefficient unless it in practice delegates its functions to a single individual and makes him despotic. I was once a member of a Committee of some two or three score members, whose business it was to decide a question of taste in relation to a proposed public building. We met once and once only, and that meeting was the ineptest I have ever attended. To take counsel with sixty is not possible. Half a dozen talked at once. No one could at the same time get at the plans and show to the rest what he objected to. After two or three hours of wild discussion one man, with no pretensions whatever to taste, but having a strong view as to what should be done in the interest of his own department, imposed himself upon the confused welter of

# The Crowd in Peace and War

discordant minds. He had the loudest voice and could hold out against the attractions of lunch longer than any of the others. His statements were clear, his resolution cut and dried, and eventually the majority yielded. One of the ugliest of modern public buildings was the result. If you want Parthenons, or Cathedrals like Rheims, that is not the way to get them. A crowd cannot take counsel. It can only listen to competing leaders and accept one of them. Where the purpose to be attained cannot so be arrived at, a crowd is impotent and should not to that end have been called into being.



## CHAPTER II

### THE NATURE OF CROWDS

ILLUSTRATING by concrete examples rather than defining, we have thus far endeavoured to show the kind of human aggregations to which the word "crowd" may be applied, and the kind of process by which such crowds are called into existence. It is now time to examine the nature of such crowds and of the individuals composing them, and to consider how their internal organisation is accomplished and with what results.

It is urged by some that a crowd is to be regarded as a separate living entity, a being with a beginning, a life, and a death of its own. A crowd is not, as most old writers used to assume it to be, either the sum or the average of the individuals composing it, but is wholly different in kind from those individuals — as different as is an animal from the cells of which the tissue of its body is built up. Radical politicians in the days of the Reform Bill asserted that the proposed extension of the suffrage would bring to the counsels of the nation a multitude of judgments arrived at by as many individual minds, each guided by a consideration of individual interests. The normal voter was imagined to be a person who, whether foolishly or wisely, thought out for himself, with the assistance of the speeches and writings of more experi-

# The Crowd in Peace and War

enced persons, what his interests at the moment were in relation to legislation proposed, and voted accordingly. But we know by experience that the ordinary voter does nothing of the kind, and the managers of all political parties alike take care that he shall not. The ordinary voter merely catches the momentary passion of one of the parties in the political campaign and off he goes shouting, betting on the result, and finally voting, in much the same attitude of mind as that of the supporters of one side or the other in a great football-match.

The opinion of a crowd has no relation to the reasoned opinion of the majority of its members, but is a mere infectious passion which sweeps through the whole body like an electric current, and frequently is originated and propagated from a single brain. Once a crowd is really formed, once the members of it have fallen under one another's mesmerism, "the individual withers and the" crowd "is more and more," the individual is in fact absorbed for the time being into the crowd and merely contributes his life to the vitality of the collective body. Thus, in the excitement of a battle, the soldier is wont to lose the sense of his individuality so completely as sometimes to be unconscious of a severe wound. He is entirely absorbed into the crowd. Hence his loss of the fear that is so commonly felt by soldiers on the eve of battle. Losing himself he loses the desire of self-preservation, and fear only comes upon him when the structure of his crowd is broken up and panic sets in. The typical coward is an unmesmerisable person, one who cannot merge his individuality into the crowd, but retains always the sense of self and with it the desire of self-preservation.

# The Nature of Crowds

Such a person, in face of an enemy, feels himself to be one against a thousand and is afraid. Few individuals can face a hostile crowd without fear. A woman feels herself to be in this position as against the mass of men, hence her constitutional and proper timidity. The really brave man is he who can fearlessly face a multitude alone; but such men are rare. Commonplace bravery is mere loss of individuality in a fighting crowd. Hence the purpose of regimental organisation to integrate the units and strengthen the regiment's power of absorption. The kind of man who cannot be thus absorbed is the constitutional coward. He is an undesirable unit whose tendency is to disintegrate the crowd in which he is placed. He should be gotten rid of, but why should he be shot? It is a weakness of universal compulsory military service that it must sweep together into the ranks many such undesirables, who may be good enough human material nevertheless, but not for fighting purposes.

Terror, has no unifying force. Terror scatters; pluck unites. Hence the crowd-sung prestige of bravery and the crowd-contemned disgrace of fear. Courage is the highest crowd-virtue, because it makes for the crowd's success. Fear is the worst of crowd vices, because it makes for crowd-disintegration. But should individuals necessarily share these judgments? Cunning and foresight or prudence may be as efficient in preserving the life of an individual as pluck; indeed they may be more efficient. It is by them that women have oftenest preserved their offspring. But cunning in a man is not a crowd virtue. It was the virtue of the weakly organised people of the hunting stage, and in modern life it is the main virtue of

# The Crowd in Peace and War

the criminal classes, who are survivals of prehistoric men. Cunning and lack of cohesion characterise the criminal — a thorough individualist. But cunning is not infectious. It does not inspire a crowd. It has no co-ordinating effect. Pluck is infectious. The truly brave man, who never loses his head but remains under all circumstances fully self-commanded, never fails to inspire a like power in his comrades to a greater or less extent. His virtue is the most precious of all to a crowd, and his reputation (that is to say the crowd's opinion of him) stands highest of all.

The difference in character between a crowd and the individuals composing it leaps to the eye the moment the crowd is regarded dispassionately by a cool and detached observer. Note, for example, the different way in which a very small joke will appeal to an individual and to a crowd. What would scarcely raise a smile when spoken to an individual will raise roars of laughter from a crowd. A sentiment which, addressed to an individual, would seem the feeblest platitude will be received by an audience with rounds of applause. Here is a concrete instance. Mr. Asquith, on the 2d of October, 1914, addressed a most important meeting at the Guildhall of the City of London on the causes of the Great War. In the course of his speech he made the following very simple remarks in reference to the modern German dogma that "force is the test and measure of right":—

"It is one of those products of German genius which, whether or not it was intended exclusively for home consumption, has, I am happy to say, not found a market abroad, and certainly not within the boundaries of the

## The Nature of Crowds

“British Empire. We still believe here, old-fashioned people as we are, in the sanctity of treaties, that the weak have rights, and that the strong have duties,” — and so forth. It is all sound common sense, clearly expressed, but the reader who has this moment perused these words has certainly not been moved to laughter by them in his comfortable arm-chair, nor has his enthusiasm been so kindled as to make him stamp about the room or otherwise provide any muscular discharge for his feelings. Here, however, from the “Times” report, is the effect of these same words upon an unusually superior audience, intellectually far above the level of an ordinary public meeting: —

“It is one of those products of German genius which, whether or not it was intended exclusively for home consumption, — (*Laughter*) — has, I am happy to say, not found a market abroad, — (*Cheers*) — and certainly not within the boundaries of the British Empire. (*Renewed cheers.*) We still believe here, old-fashioned people as we are, — (*Laughter*) — in the sanctity of treaties, — (*Cheers*) — that the weak have rights, and that the strong have duties, and small nationalities have every bit as good a title as large ones to life and independence, and that freedom for its own sake is as well worth fighting for to-day as it ever was in the past — (*Cheers*) — and we look forward at the end of this war to a Europe in which these great and simple and venerable truths will be recognised and safeguarded for ever against the recrudescence of the era of blood and iron. (*Cheers.*)”

It is with reluctance that I dwell upon the phenomena of the nature of the crowd, as they have been frequently

# The Crowd in Peace and War

discussed of late years, especially by French and Italian writers, but all my readers may not be alike familiar with what to some will be commonplace. Amongst English writers Mr. A. B. Walkley, in his capacity of theatrical critic, has perhaps described the crowd-nature most plainly as manifested by theatre audiences. "A "crowd," he said in his evidence before the Censorship Committee, "is a *new entity*, differing in mind and will "from the individuals who compose it. Its intellectual "pitch is lowered, its emotional pitch raised. It takes "on something of the characteristics of a hypnotized "'subject.' It tends to be irrational, excitable, lacking "in self-control. Many Frenchmen under the Terror, "gentle and humane as individuals, made up crowds "guilty of horrible atrocities. Questioned afterwards, "they could not account for their actions. Some inex- "plicable change had taken place in them, and that "inexplicable something was the influence of the crowd. "A theatrical audience has the peculiar psychology of "the crowd. An offensive play, performed before it, has "an entirely different effect from that which the play "would have if read separately and privately by each "individual. The crowd is the controlling factor in the "matter. That, I submit, is the real justification for "retaining a Theatrical Censorship."

On another occasion (14th Dec., 1903), the same writer affirmed that all persons "belonging to a crowd "descended several rungs of the ladder of civilisation." Mobs, as we know, thus descend. So do other forms of crowd. Here is what a correspondent of the "Times" says about the Russians:—

# The Nature of Crowds

“I suppose it may seem strange that a kindly man, such  
“as I have pictured the Russian soldier, can be as ferocious  
“in attack as he certainly is. Indeed, it is hard to reconcile  
“the characteristics of gentleness and mildness and good  
“humour with the hideous fury into which men work them-  
“selves in battle. The psychology of war is such, however,  
“that not only with the Russians, but, I think, with all  
“men in the tumult and chaos of action, the characteristics  
“of the individuals are merged into the quite foreign per-  
“sonality of the mass itself. Individuals who by them-  
“selves are the mildest of men, become transformed in  
“action into creatures whose own individuality is utterly  
“lost. Once the action is over, these same individuals will  
“minister to the needs and agonies of their prisoners with  
“as much gentleness and sympathy as to men of their own  
“race.”

Mr. Moreton Frewen's observations on the German crowd indicate that it descends, as common opinion now realises, to a lower level than that of any other civilised European nation. “The more we read German history,” he says, “the more we discover that the German nature “aggregates dangerously; that the tendency of any “German crowd is to be worse than its units. It cannot “fairly be said that we English are only now finding this “out at a time when instead of being the ally of Germany “we are her enemy. Look at what the Duke of Wellington wrote to his mother in 1807 (Maxwell's ‘Life of “‘Wellington’): ‘I can assure you that from the General “‘of the Germans down to the smallest drummer boy in “‘their legion the earth never groaned under such a set “‘of murdering, infamous villains. They murdered,

# The Crowd in Peace and War

“robbed and ill treated the peasantry wherever they  
“went.”

“The late General Grierson, who commanded our troops  
“at the relief of the foreign embassies, at Peking, told me  
“that the infamies perpetrated by the Germans on these  
“helpless Chinese were such that he could never again  
“break bread with a German. The soldiers of the  
“American expeditionary force must be equally aware  
“of this.”

The fundamental reason why a collective body of human beings differs *toto cælo* from so many individuals is because no two individuals can ever think alike, whilst any number can feel alike. *Quot homines tot sententiæ* is proverbial truth. Witness the hopeless struggles of generations of churchmen to state simple dogmas in plain words so as to be universally acceptable, and the ultimate necessity to which they were driven to compel acceptance of formulæ by force and to wink at individual freedom of personal interpretation of the actual words and phrases. But no such difficulty arises in connexion with feelings and passions. The Germans were able to unite very completely in hating England, without need to quarrel about definitions of terms. Who wants a definition of love, of pride, of grief or joy? We can all unite without the smallest difficulty in such emotions, and moreover our union of feeling is a different kind of union from that which we describe as intellectual agreement. Union of feeling promotes, and flourishes in, a state of enthusiasm. It is like a mesmeric condition. It heightens our sense of life; it carries us beyond the limitations of our intelligence; it takes us into another world,—



# The Nature of Crowds

higher or lower as the case may be,—but at any rate other than the world in which we normally exist.

Hence it is that a crowd has all the emotions and no intellect. It can feel, but it cannot think. It has in common a subtle sensibility to feeling. Passion sweeps through it, but it can reason about nothing; for it has no reasoning apparatus in common. The nerves of all its members may certainly be in connection with one another, but not their thoughts. They can applaud or “boo” in common, but they cannot criticise or differentiate. Acceptance or rejection are their only alternative; feeling can accomplish those operations with hardly any help from reason.

“You can talk a mob into anything,” wrote Ruskin (*‘Sesame,’* p. 39), “its feelings may be — usually are — on “the whole generous and right; but it has no foundation “for them, no hold of them; you may tease or tickle it “into any, at your pleasure; it thinks by infection for “the most part, catching an opinion like a cold, and there “is nothing so little that it will not roar itself wild about, “when the fit is on; — nothing so great but it will forget “in an hour, when the fit is past. But a gentleman’s “. . . passions are just, measured, and continuous.”

Ancient writers long ago realised some of the qualities of the great public crowd, but for the most part only its evil qualities. Here are a few citations which might be multiplied almost indefinitely:—

Herodotus (iii 81): ὁθέει (ὁ δῆμος) ἐμπεσὼν τὰ πρήγματα ἀνευ νοῦ, χειμάρρῳ ποταμῷ ἵκελος.

Livy (24. 25. 8). “Hæc est natura multitudinis; aut “humiliter servit aut superbe dominatur.”

# The Crowd in Peace and War

Tacitus (Ann. i. 29): "Nihil in vulgo modicum; terrere  
"ni paveant; ubi pertimuerunt impune contemni."

Sir Walter Raleigh: "The Multitude, wanting that  
"virtue which we call honesty in all men, and that es-  
"pecial gift of God we call charity, condemn without  
"hearing, wound without offence given."

Sir Thomas Roe, on the Indian public in Mogul days:  
"The multitude, full of tumor and Noyce, without head  
"or foote; only it rages, but bendes it selfe upon noe direct  
"end."

Such utterances are but superficial. All crowds, even those most suddenly and accidentally formed, possess the potentiality of good emotions as fully as of bad, and it is necessary to bear this continually in mind. A modern writer, Monsieur Tarde, by no means covers the whole ground when he says: "Si diverses qu'elles soient par leur origine, comme par tous leurs autres caractères, les foules se ressemblent toutes par certains traits: leur intolérance prodigieuse, leur orgueil grotesque, leur susceptibilité malade, le sentiment affolant de leur irresponsabilité né de l'illusion de la toute-puissance, et la perte totale du sentiment de la mesure qui tient à l'outrance de leurs émotions mutuellement exaltées. Entre l'exécration et l'adoration, entre l'horreur et l'enthousiasme, entre les cris *vive* et à *mort*, il n'y a pas de milieu pour une foule. *Vive*, cela signifie *vive à jamais*. Il y a là un souhait d'immortalité divine, un commencement d'apothéose. Il suffit d'un rien pour changer la divinisation en damnation."

All this is true, but also it is no less true that crowds may be generous, sympathetic, full of admiration for

## The Nature of Crowds

anything great or noble that they can feel, and of all manner of other admirable emotional exhibits. Crowds are neither good nor evil in the nature of things, but they may become either the one or the other.

What a crowd can descend to was shown over and over again in the French Revolution. Their enthusiasm was even at the service of a Marat. "L'apothéose de ce "monstre," continues the same writer, "le culte rendu "à son 'cœur sacré,' exposé au Panthéon, est un éclatant • "spécimen de la puissance de mutuel aveuglement, de "mutuelle hallucination, dont les hommes rassemblés "sont capables. Dans cet entraînement irrésistible, la "lâcheté a eu sa part, mais bien faible, en somme, et comme "noyée dans la sincérité générale."

If the virtues of a crowd arise from its emotions, their unmeasured character and the crowd's vices are the result of a lack of intelligence. As we have said, a crowd has no brain. It is foolish, therefore, to blame crowds for what they cannot help. The late Professor S. H. Butcher wrote: "A democratic society is inclined to do its thinking "by deputy, if only it is permitted to do its voting individually. It is so easy to think in herds through Committees and Sub-Committees and party organisations. "To exercise the thinking power for its own sake is the "central idea of Academic studies. Suppress thinking "and you will be able to suppress freedom itself." That is, of course, perfectly true, but it is in the nature of things. A democratic society can no more think than it can go and study at a University, and the whole business of the modern world is to find out how best to do its thinking for it.

# The Crowd in Peace and War

A crowd is, in fact, like an explosive. It can easily be fired, and the result, if it is fired casually, is likely to be highly disastrous. It may even go off, as mobs do, by spontaneous ignition. On the other hand, its powers may be utilised to accomplish great ends, and have been so utilised throughout the ages in which civilisation has been slowly growing. For crowds are the nest and abiding place of ideals, and it has been by ideals that man has been raised from the level of the beast. A crowd lacks reason, but possesses faith. The ideals of a St. Francis, for instance, first form a crowd and then by it regenerate the world. In the succession of ideals has been the life of the human soul, and he who shall write the history of that succession, as no one has yet attempted to write it, will produce the story of the growth of humanity. Once an ideal has become incorporated in a crowd, it must stand its trial in the great inquest of the world. If it be a right and noble ideal, the crowd prospers and spreads, engulfing more and more individuals and inspiring them, and through them the generations that are to follow. If it be a vile ideal, resistance will rise up against it and the crowd that is formed upon it will fail. The ideal of might is now upon its trial, and the world has risen up against it and said No! to it, and the crowd that is animated by it has not succeeded yet.

When we have said this much we have really explained nothing; we have but stated the existence of certain phenomena which those who look can behold. The relation of man to man is still a dark mystery which science has scarcely yet attempted to lighten. What is it that gives

# The Nature of Crowds

to some by birthright the capacity of dominating others? Men in their crowd-relations are "such stuff as dreams are made of." The drama, says Walkley, is a kind of hypnotic agency, "the mental state of a theatrical audience resembling that of a man in a dream, half-way between complete illusion and absolute non-illusion." What is the cause of this hypnotic condition? We talk vaguely of animal magnetism, without knowing that such a force exists. How does a brain send a message bidding the hand to close? Is the brain a battery and is the message in the nature of a telegram? Does man send out wireless messages without knowing it, and is there some unrecognised coherer in the make-up of other individuals that can receive them? Every one of us has at some time, the most phlegmatic perhaps only in their early youth, experienced the strange emotion of being raised out of his normal state into a condition of enthusiasm which the ancients likened to intoxication, wherefore they cultivated Dionysiac Mysteries. What is it that happens in us at those times? Has it something to do with our subconscious self, if indeed there be such a thing as a subconscious self at all? This is a vague region into which Science is only beginning to search a way, but in that region, vague as you please but real none the less, the phenomena of the crowd are produced. There the forces exist by which it is swayed; there the dim consciousness it has of life; and it is there, when this unknown land shall have been penetrated by an explorer of genius, that the secrets of crowd-life and of much else that we long to understand may some day be revealed. One who, like the present writer, treads with doubtful

## The Crowd in Peace and War

balance on such giddy *arêtes*, and finds his own way difficult enough to trace in the high regions where philosophers dwell, will be wise if he declines to act as guide to others, but with them waits for a leader with keener sight and steadier foot to show him also the way.

## CHAPTER III

### CROWD-UNITS

HAVING briefly dealt with the crowd as a whole, let us now consider the condition of an individual man regarded as a crowd-unit. A man may join a crowd for all sorts of reasons, he may even be born into membership of it, but he only becomes an integral part of it by "catching its enthusiasm." The fact that we normally employ the word "catch" for this process is significant. A man likewise catches a disease, that is to say the infection enters him unperceived. Enthusiasm is infectious. Reason has no part in its transfer from one to another. It descends as it were like a flame from heaven, or it rises as an exhalation from the pit. No one knows whence it cometh or whither it goeth. "So is every one that is born of the spirit." Every crowd has a crowd-spirit and every true member of a crowd catches that spirit. To go into a crowd is like going into a cholera-village; the man who does so puts himself in the way of infection. The persistent reader of a given newspaper runs the chance of presently finding himself one of its crowd. The man who goes to a revival meeting may find himself at the stool of repentance before he realises that he has actually been caught. The disease may run its course quickly or may revolutionise his life; with that question we are not at the moment concerned.

# The Crowd in Peace and War

The point to be made clear is that absorption into a crowd is not an intellectual but an emotional process. A band passes along a street with colours flying and soldiers marching proudly behind. The onlooker is tempted to march with them, falling into step. He almost feels himself one of them; the collective spirit touches him. He follows on to barracks and enlists. Or he meets a friend who has enlisted, and catches the spirit from him, or reads an exhortation in his newspaper. Nine times out of ten enlistment results from a sudden emotion. The man whose reason drives him to enlist against his will is a rare and high exception. It is the will itself that generally suffers change under the influence of crowd-emotion.

“In the East,” writes Kinglake in “Eöthen,” “you might ‘as well dispute the efficacy of grass or grain as of magic. ‘There is no controversy about the matter. The effect ‘of this, the unanimous belief of an ignorant people, upon ‘the mind of a stranger is extremely curious and well ‘worth noticing. A man coming freshly from Europe ‘is at first proof against the nonsense with which he is ‘assailed, but often it happens that after a little while ‘the social atmosphere in which he lives will begin to ‘infect him, and if he has been unaccustomed to the ‘cunning of fence by which Reason prepares the means ‘of guarding herself against Fallacy, he will yield himself ‘at last to the faith of those around him, and this he will ‘do by sympathy, it would seem, rather than conviction. ‘I have been much interested in observing that the ‘mere ‘practical man,’ however skilful and shrewd in ‘his own way, has not the kind of power that will enable



## Crowd-Units

“him to resist the gradual impression made upon his mind  
“by the common opinion of those whom he sees and hears  
“from day to day.”

Let me, in this connexion, also quote a sentence to similar effect from one of Newman's essays: “Public  
“opinion especially acts upon the imagination; it does  
“not convince but it impresses; it has the force of au-  
“thority rather than of reason; and concurrence in it is,  
“not an intelligent decision, but a submission or belief.”

“A Neutral Correspondent” writing in the London  
“Times” of May 27th 1915 describes how the German  
people were carefully and intentionally hypnotized by  
their Government. This is perhaps the greatest achieve-  
ment in that kind that has ever been accomplished in  
recorded history. I have received permission to quote  
at length from this very remarkable communication.  
When the writer entered Germany he believed himself  
able to take a detached view of the war, and that he  
was “proof against ‘atmosphere.’” He presently found  
that he was mistaken, and that his mind was being in-  
fluenced by the peculiar mood of the public into which  
he was plunged.

“The chief agency in the creation of this state of mind,  
“apart from the direct influence of the thorough military  
“organisation of the State, is the shrewd management of  
“the Press. It will be remembered that, on the outbreak  
“of war, the whole German Press was turned against  
“England overnight. Twenty-four hours after having  
“praised the vigorous efforts of Great Britain to prevent  
“war, it denounced Sir Edward Grey as the moving spirit  
“in a conspiracy to assail Germany. None but distorted

# The Crowd in Peace and War

“views from abroad were allowed to be published. The German people were told only what it was desired they should believe. All unfavourable information was treated as ‘lies,’ and a thoroughly-organised Press campaign was carried on in neutral countries in the same sense. The ‘neutral’ opinions thus inspired were reproduced in Germany as evidence that impartial foreign opinion supported the German view.

“By these means the war-mind of the German people was created and fashioned. The process still goes on, though, as I have before remarked, the French, Russian and British *communiqués* are now regularly printed in the larger newspapers, and are frequently criticised in the communications from the German Headquarters Staff. But foreign reports have no influence whatever upon the German mind. The Germans are so convinced of the accuracy of their own official versions that no other reports count.

“It is the same with enemy newspapers. In the Victoria Café at Berlin I was able to read, day by day, the French, Italian, German, and neutral journals. They were also to be bought in the newspaper kiosks of the large towns. No remarks were made when I asked for them; but I noticed a pitying smile on German faces whenever they saw others read them.

“It is not the big papers of international repute that exercise the greatest influence in Germany. In the smaller towns and agricultural districts it is the local Press that counts. In that Press none but German reports are to be found, with German explanations and German accusations against enemy countries. No at-

## Crowd-Units

“tack upon the enemy is too gross for this Press to reproduce, and nothing in Germany’s favour is too absurd for its readers to swallow. Not only is the victorious progress of the German, Austrian, and Turkish armies constantly celebrated, but the financial, industrial, and social conditions in Germany are declared to be far superior to those existing elsewhere. Dissensions between the Powers of the Entente are reported, and disturbances among their peoples are invented and dwelt upon.

“Every scrap of news that can be turned to account in this direction is magnified, distorted, and supplied from central agencies to thousands of local papers. Leading articles are supplied in the same way. Moreover, the German Headquarters’ report is posted up every day at 4 p. m. outside every telegraph office, and is circulated in special editions of the local papers, which contain nothing but this report. This local Press exercises a kind of hypnotic influence upon the people at large. As I spent most of my time in Germany in the smaller towns and rural districts, I came under its spell. Everybody had a ready explanation in answer to inquiry about the failure to reach Paris or Calais. When I asked about the news of revolutions in India and Egypt, and of Turkish victories on the Suez Canal, I was assured that they were perfectly true. The British denials were treated as ‘the usual English lies.’ And it was argued as the strongest evidence of the unreliability of English reports that naval losses which neutrals had witnessed had been kept secret by the British Admiralty.

“The cumulative effect upon me of this constant sug-

# The Crowd in Peace and War

“gestion, with its well-calculated variations in the films  
“of the cinemas and in the periodical literature, was such  
“that I seemed gradually to lose my individuality and to  
“become merged in the German mass. If it was not  
“possible for me to react against it, what chance has a  
“German, no matter how sceptically disposed, of acquiring a true perspective? It was with a sense of relief,  
“as of the passing of a nightmare, that I crossed the border, and found a freer atmosphere and neutral associations in Switzerland.”

This infectiousness of crowd-emotion is specially manifested in public, and particularly in political meetings. The ordinary large political meeting seldom consists wholly or even mainly of convinced members of one party. Usually the audience is of a mixed political complexion, with one party in a majority in the room and in complete possession of the platform. At the beginning of the meeting opponents may make objections and interruptions, but this phase can generally be relied on to pass. Once enthusiasm has been kindled all are carried away by it, and even convinced opponents may be seen in the excitement of the moment applauding speakers and sentiments which in the quiet of their own homes they hold in horror. With the close of the meeting the mood may pass, but often it happens that a permanent change in a man's sentiments is thus effected, and that is why political managers regard public meetings as of importance. They know well enough that the enthusiasm of a meeting means very little as an index of the opinions of a community, but they likewise know that it is a powerful force in affecting individuals, and

## Crowd-Units

experience has taught them that it is often far from transient. Thus says Plato (Ep. vii. 341), "In social intercourse, a light may be suddenly kindled in the mind, which when once generated, may keep itself alive."

Few, if any, mature men and women realise how many of their opinions which they firmly hold and by which they shape their lives, have been "caught" rather than consciously and intentionally adopted by reasoning process. Indeed, I believe it safe to assert that the ordinary man's opinions have been "caught" at one time or another and that his individual reason conducted him to few of them. Take, for example, the life of an ordinary professional man. In infancy and early childhood his parents and nurses from the very beginning, by continual command and correction, impress the crowd-idea upon the shaping mind. "It is not proper to do this: it is vulgar to do that. Such an action is bad manners, such another is wrong. Take your hands out of your pockets. Don't bite your nails. See how nicely behaved little Tommy is. What would his mother think of you if she saw you do so and so? No one will think you come of decent people if you behave thus." Day after day and hour after hour what people would think of him is hammered into the child, whilst the settled public opinion in the form of morals is imposed upon him as having divine sanction. Thus, not merely his conscience, of which there is much more to be said, but his manners and the whole of his nascent ideas of conduct, of right and wrong, of dress and behaviour — everything is imposed upon him as a crowd-precept backed by more or less of a religious sanction.

# The Crowd in Peace and War

A remarkable example of the effect of such training came in my way recently. A boy was employed in a picture dealer's shop, where he gave great satisfaction alike to his master and the customers by his agreeable manners and obliging disposition. He was evidently a "well brought up boy." His master one summer Saturday, when the weather seemed set fair, said to him: "You'll have a fine day to-morrow. What do you do on Sundays? Do you ever get a game of cricket?" "Oh! no, sir," he replied, "not on Sundays!" The master was surprised at the boy's tone because he knew that his father and all his family were pronounced agnostics and probably called themselves infidels. So he asked: "Why not on Sundays?" The boy answered rather indignantly: "We have been better brought up than that. It's not respectable to play public games on Sundays. I should be ashamed to do a thing like that." It was not that he thought it in any way wrong to play cricket on Sunday. There was no religious prejudice against it in his family. It was bad form. It was contrary to the crowd-standards of the folk among whom his people lived. "It was worse than wicked; it was vulgar," as the child said in "Punch."

If home training be thus effective in imposing general crowd-notions on a child, what shall we say of school-training and especially, for our present purpose, of the training of an English public school? The normal English schoolboy often reacts against what masters inculcate and is liable to adopt in his heart of hearts, and later in life to put in operation, exactly contrary principles to those inculcated by school authorities. It is from his fellow-

## Crowd-Units

boys that he really learns the conduct of life, and is made to feel the difference between what is "good form" and what is not. His discomfort as a new boy is due to the fact that he is a misfit, a round peg in a square hole, an individual who has not yet become a crowd-unit. He has to learn the school standards, to know what his fellows consider good behaviour and what disgraceful. A number of trifling external details are insisted on, but they are mere signs and emblems of public opinion — to close or not to close all the buttons of his waistcoat, to wear or not to wear a hat at a particular time of day, to walk or not down the middle or along some special side of a street — these are mere outward signs, conformity to which marks a general conformity to the unwritten school code. Throughout the whole of a public schoolboy's life in any big school he is in the grip of the school-crowd's standard, conformably with which in conduct, in speech, and consequently almost of necessity in spirit, his notions come to be fashioned. The shaping thus accomplished leaves its impress on the boy for life.

The Universities, or at all events the old English Universities of Oxford and Cambridge, of which alone I can speak with any assurance, produce a like effect upon undergraduates; and special colleges have a particular tone and spirit of their own. After subjection to the impress of the University crowd for three or four years, almost every man takes the print of it indelibly upon his personality. He receives and thenceforward accepts and tries to act up to certain standards; he also adopts a group of prejudices. Standards and prejudices are alike qualities caught from the University crowd and not imposed

# The Crowd in Peace and War

by any superior authority. Here again there are numbers of trifling observances to be followed, unimportant in themselves but indicative of crowd-conformity. Thus in my time an undergraduate in cap and gown did not carry an umbrella no matter how heavily rain might be falling. He cut the tassel of his cap short, and there were many other trifling proprieties which I forget. If these details had been imposed by University authorities they would have been evaded. They were imposed by the undergraduate crowd's collective opinion, and no one dreamed of not conforming. What was true of such trifles was, of course, equally true of important matters of conduct and manners. Conformity becomes habit and effects a correspondent shaping of the mind which after life does not avail to destroy.

Society again is one of the strongest agencies for fashioning the manners and setting the standards of mature life, whilst it should be remembered that the school and college tones have the standards of society ahead of them with which it is always their aim to be in harmony. The clear-sighted John Henry Newman wrote upon this matter: "All that goes to constitute a gentleman — the carriage, "gait, address, gestures, voice; the ease, the self-possession, the courtesy, the power of conversing, the success in not offending; the lofty principle, the delicacy "of thought, the happiness of expression, the taste and "propriety, the generosity and forbearance, the candour "and consideration, the openness of hand — these qualities . . . are they not necessarily acquired where they "are to be found, in high society?" Here is no quack rubbish about "nature's gentleman." Newman knew the



## Crowd-Units

world too well. Society is the creation of art, and a gentleman (whether he be a good man or no) is one who has acquired the Art of Living — who is an artist in the handling of the raw material of life. Rarely indeed an individual may be born in a low rank of life with a naturally faultless taste. Only such an one might be described as a “nature’s gentleman,” but that is not what the phrase is used to mean. In common use it means an honest fellow; but in truth a man may be a dishonest blackguard and yet a “gentleman.”

There are countless other crowds to which a man belongs more or less completely as he passes through life, and each of them leaves its impression upon him. Here is what Mr. Asquith said the other day in reference to the late Mr. Percy Illingworth: —

“No man had imbibed and assimilated with more zest “and sympathy that strange, indefinable, almost impalpable atmosphere, compounded of traditions and of “modern influences, which preserves, as we all of us think, “the unique but indestructible personality of the most “ancient of the deliberative assemblies of the world.”

The House of Commons is the most conspicuous group of associated men in these islands. It does not differ in kind from any other assemblage that might have a like continuity, any more than the Cabinet differs in kind from any other Committee or board that has business to attend to. Every body, every community, every group and association of men puts its impress more or less strongly upon the individuals composing it, and each one of them, in proportion to his impressionability, carries away from it and adopts as part of the fabric of what he calls his

# The Crowd in Peace and War

opinions the opinions proper to these crowds and derived by him from them.

Finally, it is in this way that public opinion constantly acts upon the individual and more often than not sweeps him along with it. Public opinion is a powerful and sometimes a valuable force, though it is easy to condemn it from superior points of view. "Thus," said Bismarck, "when great numbers of common people live close together, individualities naturally fade out and melt into each other. All sorts of opinions grow out of the air from hearsays and talk behind people's backs; opinions with little or no foundation in fact, but which get spread abroad through newspapers, popular meetings, and talk, get themselves established and are ineradicable. People talk themselves into believing the thing that is not; consider it a duty and obligation to adhere to their belief, and excite themselves about prejudices and absurdities." To rail in this way against public opinion is a temptation to which all are liable to yield at times. But it is futile. We have it and shall always have it with us, and it is as useless to rail against it as it is foolish to be carried away by it.

A commonplace public man — I suppress his name — says that: "Public opinion is generated in the homes of 'the British people.'" Nothing could be more untrue. It is generated everywhere except in the home. It arises where people meet and is propagated by the newspapers. People catch it just as the schoolboy catches the opinion of his school and the Members of Parliament the standards of the House of Commons. So London changes the countryman that settles within her; so Paris remakes the

## Crowd-Units

Frenchman; and New York, I suppose, the American. So the lawyer and the physician are moulded according to professional standards, and so the soldier takes on the *esprit de corps* of his regiment and the army. A well-known writer used the following phrase: "The 20th, a regiment of historic renown, is famous for imparting its aggregate quality to the individual soldier." All regiments do so, but not all inherit equally high standards.

Thus also a nation acts upon its citizens with a pressure that begins in their childhood and never ceases. "You English," foreigners say to us, "when you've said a thing 'isn't English,' fancy you've settled it," — and as a matter of fact we have, so far as our own ideas and conduct are concerned. But the commonplace bigoted crowd-unit, who thinks nothing of any other crowd, naturally holds that the opinions and standards of his own society should be those of the whole world; when he says of a thing that "it isn't English," he means that it is bad form everywhere and for everybody, and that attitude foreign critics naturally resent. Some of us doubtless know better, but how few they are compared with the mass, whose only views are those they have absorbed from the national and smaller crowds to which they belong or have belonged.

An Englishman and a Frenchman, when they come together, say on a high mountain side, in circumstances unusual in the daily life of either, find one another much of a sort and easily enough comprehensible. But in their normal lives they are divided by the fact that, as background of all they do and experience, they have each his own national crowd. The Englishman in every act pos-

# The Crowd in Peace and War

tulates an English background and group of sanctions, the Frenchman a French. They are like actors upon different stages, surrounded by different scenery, and acting before different audiences. It is thus that misunderstandings so easily arise between persons of different nationalities, and the moment the misunderstanding does arise, the national divergency leaps into prominence and they begin to dislike one another, and the Englishman goes away saying he dislikes the French and the Frenchman the English.

It is an entertaining if somewhat saddening occupation to sit where people congregate for talk and to listen for the expression of a really independent original personal opinion, or an idea expressed in original terms. Language itself has taken form in the mouth of crowds; as for the words themselves, the crowd determines their meaning. Whole phrases and sentences become fixed in form by having been shaped to express collective ideas. Convention governs the thoughts, the beliefs, and the speech of most. Few indeed are those who habitually test opinions in their own minds before acceptance and reutterance. Fashion in clothes is nothing but the outward and visible expression of the normal individual's general conformity in all things to the crowd of which he or she forms an item.

How few people we meet who are even partially independent individuals! Almost all talk the same commonplaces, utter a common group of opinions, and resent disagreement with them. Intolerance is proof that they are mere crowd-voices, because all crowds are necessarily intolerant. Notwithstanding this apparent uniformity, it

## Crowd-Units

is certain that no two individuals are alike in structure of mind and character. If they would think for themselves they would have to express infinite divergency of view. But they do not think. They adopt opinions like ready-made clothes or mere fashions acquired from the pattern-maker.

Here is what an American writer, Mr. G. S. Lee, has to say on this matter: —

“What this means with regard to the typical modern man is, not that he does not think, but that it takes ten thousand men to make him think. He has a crowd-soul, a crowd-creed. Charged with convictions, galvanized from one convention to another, he contrives to live, and with a sense of multitude applause and cheers he warms his thoughts. When they have been warmed enough, he exhorts, dictates, goes hither and thither on the crutch of the crowd, and places his crutch on the world, and pries on it, if perchance it may be stirred to something. To the bigotry of the man who knows because he speaks for himself has been added a new bigotry on the earth,—the bigotry of the man who speaks for the nation; who, with a more colossal prejudice than he had before, returns from a mass meeting of himself, and, with the effrontery that only a crowd can give, backs his opinions with forty States, and walks the streets of his native town in the uniform of all humanity. This is a kind of fool that has never been possible until these latter days. Only a very great many people, all of them working on him at once, and all of them watching every one else working at once, can produce this kind.”

# The Crowd in Peace and War

It seems at first sight a regrettable fact that things should be so in our modern world. But they are so, and so they must remain as long as the present conditions of rapid intercommunication and promiscuous publicity, controlled by newspapers and often manipulated for their own ends, continue and even further develop. We have arrived at a time when we can even speak of the public opinion of the world. It is still young and feeble, but it will be stronger presently. We have seen it arise against Germany in the current war, and some Germans have felt the force of it. Some day it will be a much stronger force and will produce results that we cannot foresee. Will that be an evil development for humanity? Surely not.

If public opinion can have an evil effect upon a narrow-minded individual, it is not a necessity of the circumstances of human life that crowds should atrophy their units. The wise man refuses to part with his individuality to any crowd whatever. He may belong to many, he will yield himself to none. To some, as to a nation, he will belong all his days; to some, as a school or college, he will entirely belong but only for a limited period of his life; to some, such as societies, meetings, and so forth, he will belong intermittently. To some he will render up more of himself than to others. In time of war he must yield himself wholly to his country. Herein, however, the wise man differs from the fool. The fool gives himself wholly to each and every crowd that successively attracts him. In consequence he becomes an aggregate of inconsistencies. But inconsistency, as Mr. G. L. Calderon says, "weighs for nothing with enthusiasts. The faculty of "believing contrary things at the same time, of believing

## Crowd-Units

“that which they cannot understand, or that which they know to be false, is the most characteristic feature of that large and growing class. Yet their opinion is by no means to be neglected; for they are the makers of reputations; they are the light kindling-stuff which sets the soldier world on fire.”

I cannot better conclude this chapter than with a passage from a Commencement address by Mr. George E. Vincent, President of the University of Wisconsin:—

“Modern students of human nature have changed the old saying, ‘Many men, many minds,’ into the new dictum, ‘One man, many selves.’ There is much talk of multiple personality. Our complex modern life reflects itself in a composite person. A man is said to have as many selves as there are social groups of which he feels himself a member. To maintain a business self which can look a moral self straight in the eye, to have a theological self on good terms with a scientific self, to keep the peace between a party self and a patriotic self, to preserve in right relations a church self and a club self—such are the present problems of many a man or woman. One way to escape embarrassment is to invite at a given time only congenial and harmonious selves, and to banish from the company the selves that are discordant and disconcerting. The strong soul is he who can summon all his selves into loyal team play. Personality is the name men give to this unity of the self, and purpose is the organising principle. Only, as many groups of thought and feeling are schooled into co-operation by a well-considered steadfast aim, can a man be master of a single self. To be sure, unity of a sort can be achieved

## The Crowd in Peace and War

“by one who has a meagre company of selves. Narrowness, provincialism, bigotry, describe a personality in which unity of purpose is won at the sacrifice of breadth, outlook, and sympathy. The highest type of personality grows out of many far-reaching selves which have been selected and organised into unity by a dominant purpose. It is no easy task to unify often divergent and conflicting impulses, habits, memories and ideals into a harmonious hierarchy of aims. But such singleness of ideal and effort creates power. The ideal personality includes many selves organised by a masterful purpose and unified by a spirit of harmony.”



## CHAPTER IV

### CROWD-CONTINUITY

IF a main function of the Crowd be to incorporate and give currency and effect to ideals, it possesses a scarcely less valuable quality in that it is the depository of what we call Tradition. Tradition is Crowd-Memory. I do not here refer to traditions concerning facts, such for instance as that which any villager in my neighbourhood will relate about a certain disused quarry by Medway-side, whence he will tell you — and probably with truth — that the stone was hewn for the Tower of London. Such traditions of fact are as often false as true, are almost always inaccurate, and cannot be believed without other confirmation. It is only when events have been clothed in poetic form and are become legends that a crowd carries them down through successive generations, and then it is the spirit and emotion, produced by the event on the folk, which thus survives. Written record is as much superior to tradition for preservation of facts as an educated individual is to a parish meeting as a reporter of them, record being a function not of emotion but of intelligence, which no crowd can possess. But emotional tradition can linger long in the heart of a crowd, though it cannot be completely written down even by a poet. This brings us to consider how a crowd can be extended through time as well as space, and the consequent results of that

# The Crowd in Peace and War

temporal extension in their effect upon the units at any moment composing it.

We may take the House of Commons as type of one crowd which has a long life, and is formed of successive generations of individuals. From the present back to its beginning there may have been, there probably has been, an unbroken series of overlapping memberships. Members of the House to-day may indeed be in veritable physical connexion with the House of, say, the fourteenth century. The people of a given day are all in physical contact with one another. Each meets many, each of them many more, and so on, so that the impression produced by one upon another may be transferred to a third, on to a fourth, to a hundredth, to a thousandth, till by physical transference it reaches the very end of the earth, without any intervention of writing or printing. Thus also, in the case of the House of Commons, the general impression produced by a man on his contemporary members in the fourteenth century, may have been transmitted by the survivors among them to the new members of the next generation, and by them to those that followed them, and so on down to the present day. Personal contact with the past through successive generations is thus similar to personal contact with remote places through moving individuals.

Dominant personalities have left a continuing impression on the assembly to which they belonged. Fox, Burke, Pitt, and all the rest still influence, still to a certain extent survive, in the House of Commons of to-day. Its tone and spirit would be a little different from what they are but for them. The last newly-elected member, when

## Crowd-Continuity

he takes his seat, comes within the range, the actual still operative physical range, of those bygone influences. Gladstone still affects him, though he may not, probably does not, realise it; Disraeli in some degree has influence over him; and all the great aristocrats of the past as well as all the great tribunes of the people live on in the last batch of those Labour Members who have not merely been elected to but have been captured by the spirit of that undying assembly. Its great men too were often as much fashioned by it as it by them. Imagine a General Election taking place to-day in which not a single former member were returned; imagine that brand-new House meeting but inheriting no permanent officials, no rules of procedure, no recorded or remembered customs. Suppose too that the existing Parliament buildings had been burnt to the ground, that a new building had to be devised for the new House, and that no one knew what the form, the seating, and all the other important details of the old one had been. Evidently such a House of Commons would fail to resemble in many important respects the body we know. It would represent the people of the United Kingdom at the moment, but the actual House of Commons also represents in some degree the generations that have passed. When the London County Council was for the first time called into being, it was a body without traditions, not elected even by old parties with characteristic policies. It had no building prepared for it, no permanent officials. Everything had to be created. Anyone who remembers that first Council and compares it with the existing body will recognise a great difference between them. That indeed was

## The Crowd in Peace and War

born in enthusiasm, a new enthusiasm for London. Its members were ready for all manner of hard work and self-sacrifice, but they had to find out what they could do, how they could co-operate, how oppose what seemed to them wrong principles; they had to discover what each one was good for and how his capacity and eagerness could be harnessed and made available for the common purpose. Nowadays the London County Council has no such problems. Its rules are formulated and have received many precise interpretations to meet particular and unforeseen situations. Its parties are organised. Its Committees have the area exactly defined within which each works. It has begun to accumulate traditions and prejudices. It has built up a body of permanent officials trained in its service. It possesses a definite spirit and is well launched on what will probably be a long career. It still possesses much of the enthusiasm and ambition of youth, but it already grasps at the splendours which every long-lived crowd likes to obtain at the expense of the individuals who generate it. There is no reason why a public body should be splendidly housed. There is no reason why it should work in a palace. A row of ordinary houses would do for its offices and any shaped hall for its general assembly. But it has the power to house itself as it pleases at the public expense; it imposes upon the public by pretending that the public's glory lies in the splendour of its representatives' accommodation; and it votes itself a palace beside the Thames in open and shameless rivalry with the Houses of Parliament. Such is the way of representative crowds which are not controlled by the veto of wise individuals.

## Crowd-Continuity

The London County Council at its first assembling had the Parliaments and municipal assemblies of the world for examples. The House of Commons when first it met had no such forerunners. It had to find itself and to shape its own structure and environment. That was a long and gradual process. By contest with the Crown and with the House of Lords it slowly fashioned and slower still learnt its own powers; it likewise learnt to know itself. Always divided by parties, it yet always retained and indeed continually increased its sense of its own separate collective life. Whig and Tory might be violently opposed. They became as one when the dignity of the House was assailed. Thus in process of time the spirit of the House took form, and with each generation it came to enshrine an ever widening volume of tradition. It set its mark upon its members with ever increasing inevitability, and that mark grew more precise and individual with the passing of the generations. They came and went, but the House remained. Its political complexion might change; the social levels from which its members were drawn might become more various; the House did not itself alter in spirit with any corresponding rapidity. It altered of course. All things that have life grow and change and ultimately become old and pass away. But the life of the House of Commons has been long and it is not yet coming to an end. The generations vanish swiftly. The collective body changes slowly. It preserves its ancient traditions. Its spirit is largely traditional. One generation may alter it a little, may engraft on it some new ideal, may widen its outlook in some direction, but the largest factor in its spirit at any moment is not the element contributed to it

# The Crowd in Peace and War

by its existing members, but the vast inheritance it has received from all the generations which have preceded them.

In these respects the House of Commons is like any other collective body, membership in which is of a defined and limited character. Such is a public school, a college, a university. All alike are the guardians of tradition and inherit most of the spirit which they incorporate and transmit. Without organised crowds the generations would not be held together as they are. The vitality present at any moment in a group of this kind is far stronger than its constituent members at any moment could contribute. They supply its executive limbs, but the force that moves them comes from far back among the generations whose bodies rest from labour. The fire that is within them is none of their kindling; they have but to tend the flame.

The Japanese, with their beautiful social instinct and their recognition of the priceless value of continuity, express this indebtedness of the present to the past in a very beautiful form. After their victorious campaign against Russia, they performed a remarkable national ceremony. Headed by their King they summoned the spirits of their ancestors to receive the thanks of the living for what the dead had enabled them to accomplish. They placed the laurels of victory not around their own brows, but on the tombs of the forefathers that begat them and had generated and infused into the people those ideals and that spirit which had enabled them to attain their success. The ceremony expressed a profound truth. Of the Chinese also, it is written, that for

## Crowd-Continuity

them the generations past and the generations to come form with those that are alive one single whole. All live eternally, though it is only some that happen at any moment to be upon the earth. They think of Humanity as a single Being, spiritual and eternal, manifesting itself in time in the series of generations.

What any generation can accomplish in faith and growth is little compared with what has been accomplished for them by the generations that have gone before. This is evident enough in the case of material possessions and the great treasure of the world's art, but it is still more true for the world's ideals. It is these that are the most precious of all its belongings, and for the preservation of these it has, not individuals, however great, but crowds to thank. For let me declare again that it is in crowds that ideals reside. It is they that incorporate them and they that transmit them. An individual may invent an ideal, but unless he can get it incorporated in a crowd it is barren of effect and dies with him. Rail against the crowd as we may for its intolerance, its pride, its fickleness, its lack of measure, and all the other shortcomings of which we are only too easily aware, it yet remains true that upon crowds our spiritual life depends, that from them we draw our enthusiasms, and to them we owe those flames of love and passion and glory which make the life of each individual the splendid opportunity that it is.

Alas! my subject runs away with me, and many a simple fact needing to be set down plainly in its place is liable to be forgotten in the heat of writing. I have written only of the limited crowds, the organised bodies that have a definite membership, but others of more

# The Crowd in Peace and War

nebulous character must not be forgotten. Such is Society, to which we have already referred in another connexion. That likewise develops with age and transmits its changing spirit from generation to generation. We speak lightly of "the traditions of good society," but no one can overestimate their power as a civilizing agency. Time is an essential element in creating them. The spread of good manners downward through the various strata of the inhabitants of a country is a very slow process, though in normal times it is continuous, and occasionally may be hastened by purposeful effort. Thus in our own day the labours of primary school teachers — a most excellent class who have taken up much of the work of the mediæval clergy — are producing an already visible effect in taming the savage manners of the lower orders, as those still living can remember them. Even so, however, good manners cannot be propagated quickly. They have to take root in descending layers of the people, mainly by a kind of induction from each layer to the one below it, and this inductive process is liable to be confused with snobbery. Women are the principal agents. They become civilized in any rank before their menfolk submit to the process under their direction.

It is possible to make a good guess at the age of the civilisation of any people by noticing the manners of the lowest classes. Thus in India good manners are practically universal and are as much the prerogative of a sweeper as of a Maharaja. The same is true of the Arabs and all Bedouin folk, who have cultivated manners from an extreme antiquity. Egypt likewise, and for the same reason, is inhabited by a highly civilised people. When



## Crowd-Continuity

we pass to Europe the condition is markedly different. Only in Spain are good manners almost universal, and that is because there the ancient civilisation of Rome was but slightly set back by the numerically small numbers of the Teutonic invaders and was soon afterwards reinforced by the distinguished conquering Moors. All round the Mediterranean civilisation is of greater antiquity than further north, and consequently manners are good, if not of such high finish as those of the East. The ancient Celts fell early under the influence of good traditions and fine ideals. These were expressed in the great volume of poetry which we know them to have produced. Extinct though it be, we may infer, from the strength and gifts of the Celtic race, that its poetry must have been of high and perhaps Homeric quality. Celtic civilisation, unhelpt by Rome, is the foundation and ultimate cause of the good manners of the peoples of Ireland and the Highlands of Scotland. Rome in her turn must have been an important agent in spreading good manners, whilst the Italians all came within the sphere of the ancient Mediterranean civilisation.

What degraded European manners was the Barbarian invasions. The inroading Teutons who flooded the Roman Empire came out of their gloomy forests with the manners of bears, as the Sagas would have enabled us to judge had we not enough surviving evidence before our eyes. The present rude and uncivilised behaviour of the German army is not an index of depraved nature, but rather of immaturity. They are animated, as we know, by Prussian ideals, and the Prussians are of all European peoples chronologically nearest to barbarism. Modern

# The Crowd in Peace and War

conditions have enabled them suddenly to become, not civilised, but rich and strong, and they not unnaturally have mistaken strength for a higher kind of power which they must learn by actual experiment that it is not. In true civilisation they remain, and no blame to them, the most backward people in Europe; the manners of the Prussian lieutenant are proof of it.

Moreover, in proportion to the volume of the Teutonic element in any place is the thickness of the stratum of population burdened with bad manners. Starting from the centre of France and journeying north-eastward, the manners of the masses of the people degenerate till they reach their lowest level in Prussia. This is not due to any original sin or depravity in the German people, but simply to the fact that they have not been in contact with civilisation long enough for good manners to permeate the folk. England was deluged with this strong but ill-civilised immigration in the fifth and following centuries. It met with a relatively feeble population, partly civilised by the Celts, and they to some extent raised in time the level of the mass. In France more of the old element survived, and French influence has always been a great factor, even before the Norman conquest, in civilising England. But even so there have only passed over us some fifteen centuries since the barbarian deluge, and that is not long enough. It has taken five thousand years at least to generate the good manners of India. Time will do as much for us unless a new barbarian deluge occurs.

The measure of the civilisation of a people is not, as the science-poisoned folk of to-day believe, its equipment

## Crowd Continuity

with railways, trams, motor-vehicles, telegraphs, telephones, and the like, nor even its efficiency in drains, water-supply, hygiene, and other material adjustments. The true measure of what is rightly called civilisation, of that quality which the word "civilisation" was coined to express, is manners, — not the manners of the aristocracy, or upper classes, but those of the lower and lowest classes. Not till all the people have good manners are they describable as wholly civilised. The North and West Europeans and the English-speaking folk of North America have not, as a mass, had experience of high civilisation, and do not know what the word really means. They use it, but of course they use it incorrectly. The French are more civilised than the English and the Spaniards than the French. The people of the Western continent are necessarily less civilised than those of Europe and Asia. All of us are on the up grade, but we have a long road to travel before any of us can come to be a people of gentlemen, as the Indian people actually are.

Thus the age of a crowd is an important element in its tone and consequent power of affecting the individuals composing it. A newly founded school or University cannot influence its members in the same way as an old foundation. It may provide them with more exact, efficient, and elaborate teaching in the sciences and other subjects of study, but it cannot put on them any individual hall-mark. At most it can but start by incorporating the general ideals of its age and country and giving an opportunity for strong individual teachers to exercise their personal influence in laying the founda-

# The Crowd in Peace and War

tion of what will in time grow to be an institutional tone. A realisation of this fact has led the students in young American universities to supplement the lack of local tradition by aid of the so-called Secret Societies,—Phi Beta Kappa, Alpha Delta Phi, and so forth,—which are intercollegiate and have been formed and fostered, each one, to encourage and enforce some special undergraduate virtue or type.

It is by age that any society, from a debating club up to a nation, accumulates traditions and becomes enriched with ideals and the memory of past emotions. The people of any generation are what their forefathers made them and are only in a small degree themselves responsible either for the growth or for the decay that may happen in their time. For there are ideals that make for decay as others for growth, and every society which is born must some day perish. The Roman Empire perished utterly by the breaking up of its organisation, the destruction of its ideals, and the inroads of masses of new people. Italy went on existing, even the City of Rome continued, but there was a break, a solution of continuity. The old crowd died and a new one came to occupy its place. The same misfortune overtook Greece. Neither modern Italy nor modern Greece is a continuation of the old. They merely live in the old house. But modern Japan is a direct continuation of old Japan and has suffered no solution of continuity in its years of growth. India, for all its revolutions and invasions, has in its central structure the unsevered stem of Brahminism. Even Egypt, notwithstanding the Greek, Roman, and Arab conquests, is still at heart the land of the Pharaohs and still embodies

## Crowd-Continuity

the same ideals which the pyramids expressed for their builders. Pride of race, of nationhood, of citizenship — these are emotions which no one will undervalue, or consider to be anything but a precious birthright for those who inherit them. They are what the individual inherits from the crowd into which he happens to be born, in proportion to its age and its historical accomplishments, to the great names it honours and to the great deeds its fathers have wrought. It is a notable power for good. “*Civis Romanus sum*,” — “a citizen of no mean city.”

## CHAPTER V

### CROWD-INSTINCTS

ALL crowds possess, amongst other qualities, two instincts which are of special importance in relation to our present inquiry: the instincts of expansion and of self-preservation. The former is indeed to a large extent the outcome of the latter, because the larger a crowd becomes the less easily can it be suppressed. Both, in fact, are normal qualities of a living entity. Growth is the sign of life. Whatever lives must have its birth from something that went before, its early stages of weakness and comparative formlessness, then the stage when it takes on a definite and individual form, after that a longer or shorter period of growth, succeeded by a time of culmination, and finally the inevitable decline and death. Through all these stages the instinct of self-preservation is not absent, for even in extreme old age it not uncommonly survives. Few living things yield themselves willingly to extinction — crowds hardly ever.

The desire for expansion finds its counterpart in a crowd's attractiveness, to which reference has already been made. Crowds, like some serpents, fascinate the victims they are about to devour. For in this case also the victim does not merely join himself to the crowd, like one brick in a building to another, but he is, in certain cases at any rate, so absorbed and digested by it as to lose

## Crowd-Instincts

his individuality altogether and become an integral part of the larger creature, as a cell in living tissue. The hunger of a crowd may be compared with the hunger of an animal; it must assimilate, not only that it may grow but that it may merely remain alive. The individual cells in tissue are worn out, consumed, and have to be replaced; so is it with the units of a crowd. By death, by change of mind, by alteration in the circumstances of individual life, every crowd is being destroyed all the time, and the destruction of its tissue must be made good. This is obvious in the case, for instance, of a school or university, and it is hardly less evident in a church or a political body. All clamour for converts, for new adherents, new members. Nowadays many crowds, from nations downwards, try to keep accurate statistics of their membership from year to year so as to detect the first signs of a falling off. The census of a people, like the temperature of a human body, is a valuable indication of the national health. When any undesirable change is registered the political physicians hurry forward to diagnose a disease and prescribe remedies. At such times the crowd becomes more or less alarmed, as several European nations have been in recent years by the falling-off of their birth-rate. The sudden drop in the birth-rate of Germany may have been one of the impulses which impelled the governing class in that country to plunge Europe into war, and thus, in case of victory, to provide a new stimulus of growth to the Teutonic crowd.

The instinct of Expansion has been throughout all history one of the great causes of war, not, as I trust hereafter to show, the deepest seated cause, but an important

# The Crowd in Peace and War

contributory cause. In earlier stages of civilisation it was oftener operative than in modern times; indeed, the ordinary run of histories seem concerned with little else throughout two or three thousand years than wars of expansion. It was by such wars, or by wars seeming to be such, that the states and finally the Empires of the ancient world were built up. The growth of organised humanity was largely effected by adding village to village till small states arose, and then by adding statelet to statelet; and this was almost wholly accomplished by war and conquest. In the remote past of earliest Egypt and Chaldæa we can dimly perceive the rudimentary process going forward. Thus Egypt grew to be a single kingdom by an agglomeration of small units and the contemporary development of an internal structure that gave to the whole a common life, while simultaneously the little local gods and totems were amalgamated into a pantheon and a national religion was wrought out of them. Thus Babylonia arose, thus the Hittites, Assyria, the Ægean power, and so forth. And then the kingdoms fought one another into Empires. The Babylonian Empire fell to the Assyrian, the Egyptian and Assyrian to the Persian, the Persian to Alexander, and the Alexandrian to all-embracing Rome. With each increase the internal structure became more complex and efficient, religious ideas more comprehensive, mankind more socially alive, till finally it was possible for a world religion to be born and a new cycle of human development to begin in the large Empire of Rome, which contained or was in contact with all then existing centres of civilisation.

The instinct of national expansion is, however, only an



## Crowd-Instincts

example on a large scale of what is felt by every crowd, even the most ephemeral. A public meeting loves to be crammed. The tighter the pack the warmer the enthusiasm. Individuals would be less uncomfortable if they had more room; yet what meeting would willingly thin itself? If the hall is but half full the air is better to breathe and all present can sit at ease; yet no one is pleased by such considerations; on the contrary a thinly attended meeting lacks life and is far harder to deal with than a pack. Those present want a bigger company. They welcome an influx, and if by some management the place fills up, a general sense of satisfaction is spread. Ten meetings of a thousand could be much more easily addressed than one meeting of ten thousand, and those present could more quietly hear and calmly estimate the value of a speaker's arguments. Moreover the ten small meetings would be cheaper to organise and, if reason were the thing appealed to, much more efficient than the one great meeting. But what do we in fact see? An English movement dates its success from the day when it can fill the Albert Hall with a shouting throng; and it is an obvious fact that one successful, enthusiastic Albert Hall gathering is worth more for purposes of propaganda than a score of smaller gatherings in unimportant halls and chapels.

Every crowd desires to grow. The agencies and arts of propaganda are the expression of this desire. Public meetings, advertisements of all kinds, publicity in every sense, the circulation of literature, the enterprise of newspapers, the adoption and diffusion of popular cries or popular songs — these and all manner of like activities

# The Crowd in Peace and War

have no other end than to spread abroad the ideals of crowds and attract adherents to them. But there are other very significant actions which display the crowd-nature even more plainly. A crowd that has never come physically together gains greatly in vigour if it can be in whole or even in part embodied. If it can be seen it will bring to bear on outsiders that attractiveness which every embodied crowd possesses. If it can see itself it will grow hot. Hence the great political demonstrations which are sometimes organised,—the huge assemblages, for instance, of the Primrose League, or the mammoth meetings in Hyde Park. The people who attend them only for the most part know that speaking is going forward at certain centres. Many of them hear nothing, but that makes no difference; they see one another, or rather they see the crowd, and they are very liable to catch its enthusiasm and become a part of that greater body of which those present are a representative portion.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The following remarks on theatre-audiences by Mr. Walkley are notable in this connexion.

“The truth is, the behaviour of the audience, the theatrical crowd, is not profitably to be studied as something separate and peculiar. It ought, we submit, to be considered as part of a larger subject, the behaviour of the crowd in general. A crowd has an individuality of its own, merely because it is a crowd, and it cannot but be interested in its own individuality, apart from all reference to the cause which has brought it together. The crowd finds itself an interesting spectacle. From the moment of its formation it becomes self-conscious, self-assertive. To absorb its attention—that is to say, to make it forget its own existence—is an extremely difficult feat. How many platform orators, how many speakers in the House of Commons, how many preachers, how many actors can do this? So few in any given generation that the whole generation knows their names. In his preface to *Le Fils Naturel* the younger Dumas compared the theatre in this respect with the church. ‘Like

## Crowd-Instincts

An even more rudimentary application of the principle of crowd-attractiveness is the organisation of processions. The longer they can be made the more useful they are, and the more they attract and impose upon the outsider. Nothing would seem less likely to convert an opponent into an advocate of female suffrage than to see a number of women marching in orderly sequence along a street, even if they carry flaming inscribed banners and distribute leaflets as they go. But political organisers know the value of such efforts, and are willing to spend a considerable fraction of their resources upon them. A remarkable instance of this crude method of propaganda was the procession of "Business men" which marched along Fifth Avenue, New York, to show themselves as a crowd opposed to the election of Mr. Bryan to the Presidency of the United States, and to the ideas of his supporters as represented in his person. No one made any speeches. The "Business men" just marched along in ordered ranks and showed their mass for what it was

"'the church,' he said, 'we (i.e., the dramatists) address ourselves to men  
"assembled together, and you cannot gain the ear of the multitude for  
"any length of time or in any efficacious way save in the name of their  
"higher interests.' What is called, then, the 'inattention' of the crowd  
"is proof of the independence, and the potency, of its existence. It is not  
"really inattention; its attention, on the contrary, is of the keenest, but  
"it is directed to itself. Hence the perpetual difficulty of all arts which,  
"like the art of the theatre, involve the presence of a crowd. The crowd  
"has assembled because it is interested in the particular art, but, when  
"once it is assembled, it finds another subject of interest and a dangerous  
"rival to the artistic subject—namely, itself. The great dramatist, the  
"great actor, is the man who can master this enemy of his, the absorbed  
"delight of the crowd in its own existence. If it is true nowadays that  
"half the people in the theatre do not listen to the play,' we fear that is  
"an indictment of the play, not of the people."

# The Crowd in Peace and War

worth. The effect produced upon public opinion was considerable. If it did not defeat the candidate, it contributed to his defeat, and that, not because of the individual weight and wisdom of this and the other person marching along, but because of the crowd of them, all united by a common emotion of hostility to Mr. Bryan's raw political theory of things, a hostility just now for the fourth time vindicated, despite President Woodrow Wilson's "affectionate" solicitude.

Further, the crowd not only needs to make adherents and thus maintain its existence and increase in volume and power; it needs no less to assimilate, to digest, the individuals which it swallows up. The whole force of public opinion within a crowd is bent on compelling the complete identification of the individual with itself. The business of every crowd is to change free individuals into crowd-units, to make them feel with it, act with it, and if need be give their very lives for its benefit. The dominance of the crowd over the individuals composing it is one of the most important facts to be noted and remembered. A thousand illustrations might be cited. It is nowhere more evident than in the case of political parties. Most intelligent men if left to themselves would have a set of political views of their own, and no two would think quite alike. That kind of freedom of the individual mind is most undesirable from the party organiser's point of view. He wants "good party men" and them only. Gilbert put the common point of view wittily in the well-known lines:—

"Every boy and every girl that's born into the world alive  
"Is either a little Liberal or else a little Conservative."

## Crowd-Instincts

The business of the local politician is first to catch adherents to his party and then to drill them into "good party men," so that they accept the views of party leaders whole and without question, and change them without protest when ordered to do so. Thus our Free-Trade Conservative party was all but transformed into a Protectionist body at the word of command of some of its leaders. The individual conservative who adhered to the views he had held for a lifetime became a party-pariah if he refused to change them. The same thing happened to the other side. The old Liberal doctrine of *Laissez faire* was given up when the Socialists captured the party organisation, and those old liberals who adhered to the views they had learnt from Cobden, Bright, and Mill, likewise became pariahs in their own party and found their very names and watchwords stolen from them and used for the furtherance of views the very opposite to those that had given them birth. The fact is that political parties are not the incorporation of any reasoned set of opinions or political theories, but only of a group of emotions. Views and theories can only reside in a brain, and that no crowd possesses. The business of the politician, as we shall see, is to form views and theories and then catch hold of a crowd and by passion and enthusiasm, not by argument, compel them to carry those views into effect. "Don't reason with them," said the late Mr. Henry Labouchere to me; "hardy assertion is the secret of all political success." Hardy assertion may evoke enthusiasm and thus obtain the assent of a crowd when reasoning would fail.

If a political body is thus despotic over its members it

# The Crowd in Peace and War

is not in this respect different from any other crowd. Witness the despotism of opinion in a public school, still more in a religious body. Dogmatism and intolerance are the necessary qualities of every crowd, so that to combat and neutralise them is one of the greatest necessities of every age. The views of any individual may be attacked by another with perfect freedom, but the moment a view has been adopted by a crowd for whatever reason or by whatever means, that crowd considers it treason if a member of it attacks that view. To do so is heresy. Thus M. Anatole France writes, "Un hérétique, dit Bossuet, est celui qui a une opinion à lui, qui suit sa propre pensée et son sentiment particulier. . . . Ce qui est vrai, réplique M. Bergeret, c'est que les hommes animés d'une foi commune n'ont rien de plus pressé que d'exterminer ceux qui pensent différemment surtout quand la différence est très petite."

Here is another case in point, illustrated by a letter addressed to the London "Globe" some years ago:—

"SIR, — Being in Hyde Park this afternoon with some friends, we came across a Meeting being held by a pro-Boer from Exeter Hall, who was denouncing your paper for urging on the attack to break up their meeting on Friday, but I am glad to say he had no hearing, for we closed around him, and hundreds of us started singing 'Rule Britannia' and 'God Save the Queen.' He was in a tighter corner than at Exeter Hall; he was nearly torn to pieces. He ran for his life down Oxford Street, but was stopped by a Hussar, and had what he deserved. He was rescued by the police and was taken

## Crowd-Instincts

“to Marylebone Lane Police Station for safety, and was  
“followed by the crowd, all singing the national airs.  
“When arriving at the station we sang ‘God Save the  
“‘Queen,’ and the policeman who was escorting him had  
“the pleasure of taking off this pro-Boer’s hat, as he was  
“not gentleman enough himself, after which the crowd,  
“some fifteen hundred strong, marched back to Hyde  
“Park in the hopes of finding some more, but none were  
“to be seen. I may state that this pro-Boer stated that  
“he intended sending letters of protest to your paper, but  
“we would not hear him read them, but no doubt you will  
“not receive them, as they were torn up by one of the  
“crowd. All praise is due to your paper for announcing  
“Friday’s meeting in Friday’s issue, so that the pro-Boers  
“could not have it all their own way.

“I am, yours, etc.,

“True Born Englishman.”

“True Born Englishman” no doubt considered himself to be expressing highly patriotic sentiments in this remarkable letter, for patriotism masquerades in many forms. Patriotism, which is the crowd-emotion of a Nation, makes at times supreme claims on every citizen and enforces them by a public opinion so powerful that few can or desire to evade them. In time of war patriotism demands the very life of any of its citizens, and the demand is enforced by all kinds of sanctions. To the crowd all individuals are alike. The youthful Darwin and the youthful Bill Sikes are the same to it when war threatens its existence. It draws them into the ranks side by side, drills them to a common obedience, and sends

# The Crowd in Peace and War

them to take an equal chance before the guns of the enemy. The crowd does not think much of the death of an individual (unless he be of the crowd-exponent order to be hereafter mentioned). What is death to a man is only a trifling wound to a crowd. The slaughter of many is still only a wound to the collective body, and if it possesses the potentiality of life and growth, that wound will heal within the lifetime of the next generation. From the crowd's point of view all its units must some day die while it abides; nor does their death matter. "Who dies 'if England lives?'" The crowd gilds the death of those who sacrifice themselves for it and calls the dead unrealised Darwin and the dead unmanifested Bill Sikes alike heroes. But the poor young man who would have set the world on fire is dead all the same. Common crowd-opinion is that his death has been worth while. But was it? Have there not in fact been individuals who were more precious than many a nation, though perhaps it might be argued never more precious than the nation that produced them? For the national crowd at any rate the death of any individual in its defence is worth while, but it is only actually and in very truth so on the assumption that crowd-life, crowd-survival, is worth more than the highest individual life.

We readily assume that the life of a man is precious, that to live is worth while, that life means something and is a great and glorious reality, however mysterious and inexplicable it may be. Is crowd-life similarly valuable and in a higher degree? If the crowd were to break up, while all the individuals composing it lived on, would that necessarily be a catastrophe? Has the crowd also



## Crowd-Instincts

a soul for whose welfare the individual is justified in sacrificing his own life? We say "Yes," speaking the voice of public opinion impressed upon us from childhood; but is public opinion right in the nature of things, and not merely from the crowd's point of view? Few people, I imagine, could off-hand give a reasoned and convincing answer to this question.

If I were to say — as the further progress of my argument will show that I am far from saying — that some individuals are far more precious than the crowd, and ought by no means to sacrifice their lives even for their country when at war; if I were to claim that all martyrs have been ill inspired: public opinion, as represented by my reviewers, would turn and rend me. That would be an example of crowd-intolerance, of which a word must now be said.

Conventional people, who are the commonest voice used by public opinion, always distrust the unconventional man and look upon him with suspicion. The reason is because a person who sets minor conventions at naught seems to them likely to treat in the same easy fashion those higher conventions on which rests Society — the organised crowd. Such a revolted individual, outside of and perhaps opposed to the organised crowd, may become the centre of a new and hostile crowd by which the existence of the crowd in possession may be imperilled. The instinct of self-preservation is thus also one of the factors in the development of intolerance, for a crowd's most potent dread is the fear of annihilation, and it can only be annihilated when it is supplanted by another crowd. As every crowd has small beginnings

# The Crowd in Peace and War

and gathers in the first instance around a freely thinking individual as its nucleus, the instinct of self-preservation makes the members of every crowd fear, and therefore tend to hate, any individual who differs from them. Bees not only kill stranger bees from another hive, but also individuals from their own hive who have strayed away for some days and then find a belated way back. Tribes of low development in the Amazon forests act in the same manner. They kill every Indian belonging to another tribe who comes in their way; and if one of their own tribe is absent for six months or more they kill him likewise on his return. Rubber agents are aware of this fact and used to avail themselves of it to enlist rubber gatherers. They had only to catch an Indian and keep him away from his tribe for about that length of time and he inevitably became their man for life. If he ran away from them there was nowhere for him to go; his old tribe would kill him and so would the members of any other tribe. Their tribal instinct of self-preservation took that form.

Intolerance finds its classic exemplification in religious bodies, and those not of one age or religion but of all ages and all religions. Witness, as an ancient example, the destruction with which the priesthood of Thebes overwhelmed the reforms and the memory of the first great monotheist, the Pharaoh Amenhotep IV. Mediæval bigots were not more thorough. Whenever a particular kind of crowd manifests in successive generations over a long period a similar imperfection, the reason is to be sought not in some vice of the people involved, but in the nature of the crowd itself, that is to say in the nature

## Crowd-Instincts

of things. Religious intolerance is involved in the nature of a religious crowd. Though all crowds are generated and united by emotion, they are organised and used by leaders to carry out some purpose intellectually conceived; but a religious crowd is formed about religious emotion and has no other end than to propagate and maintain that emotion. The emotion may be capable of intellectual analysis and its character or concomitant beliefs may be intellectually defined as dogmas, but the fact remains that behind all the dogmas, rituals, and organisations of any church there lies finally not an intellectual conception but a religious emotion. Hence of all crowds the religious are the most emotional.

Further, seeing that of all human qualities the emotions are the most evanescent, the most liable to vary, and that crowds by their very nature must be fickle, it follows that the instinct of self-preservation in a religious crowd is more alert than in any other, because the emotion that holds such a crowd together is of an exceptionally unstable character. When we come to the consideration of the relation of crowds to religion we shall have to consider the means taken by religious bodies to give stability to their structure; at present it suffices to note the fact of this instability. In no category of human crowdship is it so easy to start a new group, first as a subdivision of an older crowd, presently as an independent body. All crowds are rather easy to split, but none so easy as religious crowds. The semi-religious character of modern socialistic movements is indicated by the tendency of socialistic organisations to subdivide. A new form of religious emotion may arise anywhere and at any time.

# The Crowd in Peace and War

A single orator suffices to give it vogue. Thus every church is always in fear of innovators. The smallest movement may grow with incredible rapidity and become a danger to the persistence of the body within which it arose. No prophet of a new emotion can be regarded as insignificant even at the start. A camel-driver made Islam, and the world trembled. Intolerance therefore, that is to say hatred of any divergence from a settled religious form, is almost a necessary quality in every religious body. A new form of religion, after a longer or shorter period of growth, becomes defined as clearly as its professors can define it, and then resists with all the power it can control every attempt to alter its definitions or transform their scope, not that its individual members care about the words, or even for the most part understand them, but because the permanence of the crowd is involved in the maintenance of its formulas.

The instinct of every crowd is to resent freedom of speech in any sense opposed to its own views, because it fears that an opposed speaker may be able, by the possession of an orator's hypnotic power, to create a crowd adverse to it. A crowd does not fear its own conversion. What it dreads is the creation of a beast like itself and inimical to it. Free individuals, that is to say individuals who are not mere crowd-units, delight in free speech, for others as for themselves, and like to hear views explained and enforced which are not their own. To such men the discussion of divergent opinions is the very salt of human intercourse. But no crowd can preserve such an attitude towards what it calls heresy. The wound a crowd fears

## Crowd-Instincts

is detachment of its constituent items and their absorption in another crowd. It in fact fears this worse than their death. If an adherent is killed the loss is "minus one"; whereas if he is not only taken away but added to another crowd the loss is "minus two." Thus conversion is twice as deadly as death, just as desertion to the enemy is, in the case of an army. Indeed conversion is more than twice as deadly as death, because a crowd may even profit by the self-sacrificing death of one of its members. "The blood of martyrs is the seed of the Church." Hence the desire to manufacture martyrs, when circumstances do not happen to produce them, is an expression of the self-same crowd characteristics as intolerance, but acting in another direction. Admitting all the good qualities possessed by crowds, and recognising how necessary and efficient they have been in the development of civilisation and humanity, we are not called upon to be blind to their many essential defects, and their instinct of self-preservation is the parent of some of the worst of these. Recognition that such must be the case has led to a great deal of rather indiscriminate abuse of crowds, whereof let the following citation from Hazlitt ("Table Talk," p. 130) serve as an example:—

"There is not a more mean, stupid, dastardly, pitiful, selfish, spiteful, envious, ungrateful animal than the Public. It is the greatest of cowards, for it is afraid of itself. From its unwieldy, overgrown dimensions, it dreads the least opposition to it, and shakes like isinglass at the touch of a finger. It starts at its own shadow, like the man in the Hartz Mountains, and trembles at the mention of its own name. It has a lion's mouth,

# The Crowd in Peace and War

“the heart of a hare, with ears erect and sleepless eyes. “It stands ‘listening its fears.’”

If there were not much to be said on the other side the case for the Crowd would indeed be a bad one, and social disorganisation should be the aim of every wise individual; wise men, however, are not often to be found labouring for that.

The self-preservative instinct of a crowd is manifested in countless other ways, which the reader can easily observe for himself. It will suffice if I cite one more. It is this instinct, curiously enough, which at our present stage of civilisation is the great impediment to the Eugenics propaganda. The purpose of Eugenics is of course to make the stuff of a people stronger and the crowd of them therefore more efficient; but at present you cannot get the public to think so. What the public, like any other crowd, instinctively dreads is loss of membership, that is to say the untimely death of its members unless they give their lives for it. An executed murderer does in fact part with his life for the crowd as completely as a soldier slain on the battle-field, but no crowd will realise this. It is in response to this instinct of the public that so much trouble is taken to save the lives of weakly infants and to keep alive the unfit of all kinds. This instinct inspires the “cockering-up” of the imbecile, the scrofulous, the consumptive, the violent criminal, the insane, and the consequent continued propagation of the unfit. Nature provides for the extinction of such by disease, malnutrition, poverty, and the like disqualifications. But the crowd, vaguely desirous of keeping up its numbers, fights this tendency of nature, not at all in the interest of the individual, but

## Crowd-Instincts

through an emotional misconception of its own interests. Of course the time may come when public emotion may be directed in another direction through the compelling influence of clear-sighted individuals. It is reason and science only, at present, that perceive the excellent results which Eugenic provisions could produce, but reasoning will never put them in force. Public opinion is not formed by reason but by emotion. Eugenists must quit their laboratories and statistical bureaus, must go forth into the public area, and evoke the passions of men on their side before they can accomplish any practical result. They will succeed in proportion as they enlist on their side the crowd-instinct for self-preservation and expansion. Kindle in the crowd the desire to be stronger and to contain more long-lived units; make it feel that this can be accomplished by working along certain lines, and the emotion of the crowd will force that work along without any sort of regard for the interests and prejudices of individuals. Only crowd-emotion can bring this about, not scientific reasoning, be it never so conclusive to the small minority who are capable of understanding it.

## CHAPTER VI

### CROWD-COMPELLERS

WE have thus far only considered the human individual as a crowd-unit or as a man keeping his individuality as pure and himself as independent as possible from all crowd-influence. But a man may have another and far more important relation to a crowd: he may be its leader. What then are the conditions of leadership? What is the nature of the relations between the leader and the crowd he leads? The life of any kind of crowd-leader is what we call "public life." It is life led under the eye of the crowd, conformably (so far as it is visible) to crowd-conventions, crowd-morals, crowd-standards, and employing crowd-language. In return for these limitations the leader enjoys a greater or less privilege of controlling crowd-action and wielding crowd-power, or at least of appearing to do so and of shining with a corresponding prestige. To live in the crowd-atmosphere, to play with the crowd-beast as a lion-tamer with lions, to partake of the mighty crowd-life, feel its throb, its power, its vaster vitality — such are the temptations that take some tolerably decent individuals into the bondage of public life. It is said that they have a thirst for power, but that is an insufficient description. Money is likewise power, which an individual may wield without help from any crowd. Crowd-power wielded by an individual



## Crowd-Compellers

is of another sort and may be, often is, combined with relative individual poverty and weakness, though the poverty has a way of passing off pretty quickly! A wealthy individual can do within limits what *he* pleases; a public man can only do what he can persuade or compel his crowd to please.

Crowd-leaders fall into one of three categories: the crowd-compeller, the crowd-exponent, and the crowd-representative. Let us consider these three types in succession.

The crowd-compeller is a type that will be recognised without difficulty. Such in recent days was Napoleon, such Disraeli. Such were the great conquerors of the past—Alexander, Cæsar, Charlemagne. Such the builders of empires, the initiators of widespread popular movements. These are the men who conceive a great idea or far-reaching plan, who fashion and master a crowd big enough to give effect to it, and who drive the crowd to do the work they determine that it shall do. Disraeli, in “Coningsby,” thus described such a man as “a primordial and creative “mind, one that will say to his fellows, ‘Behold, God has “given me thought; I have discovered truth; and you “*shall* believe.’” Observe how naturally inspiration from Heaven is claimed for these. They are likewise frequently credited with the gift of prophecy. Thus Mazzini, in pointing out the difference between the types which I name the crowd-compeller and the crowd-exponent, describes the former as “men of the mighty subjective “race, who stamp the impress of their own individuality “—like conquerors—both upon the actual world and “upon the world of their own creation, and derive the life

# The Crowd in Peace and War

“they make manifest in their works, either from the life within themselves, or from that life of the future which, prophet-like, they foresee. The great men of the second category reflect the images of the external world like a tranquil lake, and, as it were, canal their own individuality to identify their soul successively with each of the objects that pass across the surface. Each are equally powerful: the last more especially call for our admiration; the first more especially awaken our affection.”

Foresight is a necessary quality for a crowd-compeller. Poets, scholars and the like, even the greatest, do not need it. But all business, all politics, all doing depends on foreseeing difficulties and providing against them. Every crowd-leader needs foresight, but the foresight of the crowd-compeller is not as to what will happen but as to what he can cause to happen with the human organism under his hypnotic control. Foresight, however, understanding of men, quick insight, capacity for right decision, great intellectual qualities of many kinds — all these together do not suffice to make a crowd-compeller, and many of the great ones have been conspicuously lacking in some such capacities. The essential quality without which all the rest profit nothing is what is called hypnotic force. Thus it was said of Lord Stratford de Redcliffe, when he went as Ambassador to Turkey, that though he was “clothed with little authority, except what he could draw from the resources of his own mind and from the strength of his own wilful nature, yet it was presently seen that those who were near him fell under his dominion, and did as he bade them, and that the circle of deference to his will was always increasing around him.”

## Crowd-Compellers

It is seldom that a man can make himself so effective to influence the course of events and the fate of nations as this great diplomatist actually did for better or worse, by the mere impress of his will upon individuals with whom he came personally into contact. Normally the crowd-compeller is one who comes into direct contact with a crowd and masters it by the power of oratory, or at any rate by such masterful speech as attains the effect usually ascribed to oratory.

There is indeed a kind of crowd compulsion of a low order commonly well exemplified in revival meetings. Here, for instance, is a specimen as reported in the New Orleans "Times-Democrat," describing the efficiency of a negro preacher, Hamp Scott by name. The meeting had been dull, and the reporter was about to make his escape, "when an old cotton-headed negro started a camp-meeting hymn. He sang in a wailing minor key that went straight to the nerves, and before he got through with the first stanza, I could feel the tension in the atmosphere. When he finally ceased Scott himself jumped up and began to intone another hymn — a typical negro composition, with the refrain:—

" 'An de sinner is a burnin' in de pit!'

"He droned each verse in a thrilling undertone that was almost a whisper, everybody joining, but when he came to the climax he suddenly straightened up and rolled out the refrain like a clap of thunder. The effect was electrical, and in five minutes half the congregation was on the verge of hysterics. Then followed the most remarkable part of the whole performance. As the hymn died down Scott set up a sort of chant. As nearly

## The Crowd in Peace and War

“as I could make out he simply repeated the words ‘Oh! ‘Lawd! Oh-h-h!’ at the same time swaying his body “back and forth; but all the negroes took it up and the “monotonous reiteration had a strange mournful cadence “that reminded me somehow of the breaking of waves at “sea. Whether it was some peculiar quality in the voice “of the leader, or the weird surroundings, or mere cumulative excitement, I can’t say; but the chant soon had “everybody under its spell. Some of the darkies fell back, “staring and rigid, like cataleptics, and others writhed on “the floor, foaming at the mouth and tearing at their “clothes. Still others wept and shouted, and all the “while the chant continued, rising and falling like the wind “in the chimney.”

This exhibition of hypnotic force exercised by an individual over a crowd is evidently of a low order, but I will here cite an example of a not dissimilar phenomenon in which a very different class of persons was concerned. It is cited from the unpublished *Journal de Piffœl*.<sup>1</sup> The occasion in question was a meeting of Polish exiles which was held on Christmas Eve, 1840, in honor of the fête-day of Mickiewicz. Slowacki had recited some verses in honor of the poet, whereupon “le sombre Mickiewicz” arose and improvised a reply.

“Personne ne peut dire exactement ce qui s’est passé; “de tous ceux qui étaient là chacun en a gardé un souvenir “different: les uns disent qu’il a parlé cinq minutes, les “autres, disent une heure. Il est certain qu’il leur a si “bien parlé, et qu’il a dit de si belles choses, qu’ils sont tous

<sup>1</sup> Printed in W. Karénine: “George Sand, sa vie et ses œuvres”: Paris, 1912, p. 201.

## Crowd-Compellers

“tombés dans une sorte de délire. On n’entendait que cris et sanglots, plusieurs ont eu des attaques de nerfs, d’autres n’ont pu dormir le nuit. Le comte Plater, en rentrant chez lui, était dans un état d’exaltation, si étrange que sa femme l’a cru fou et s’est fort épouvantée. Mais pendant qu’il lui racontait comme il pouvait non pas l’improvisation de Mickiewicz (personne n’a pu en redire un mot), mais l’effet de sa parole sur ses auditeurs, la comtesse Plater est tombée dans le même état que son mari et s’est mise à pleurer, à prier et à divaguer. Les voilà tous convaincus qu’il y a dans ce grand homme quelque chose de surhumain, qu’il est inspiré à la manière des prophètes, et leur superstition est si grande qu’un de ces matins ils pourraient bien en faire un dieu.”

This kind of ecstatic power is perhaps possessed by relatively few and may not be very wholesome, but the results produced by it are certainly remarkable, and not always evil. Of a higher kind is the power which some possess not so much of carrying along with them in their own enthusiasm an assemblage of already sympathetic or at least of neutral persons, but of mastering and compelling to follow them an assemblage openly and consciously hostile, and of making it cheer with enthusiasm opinions which were displeasing to the people before the speaker obtained dominion over them. I have before me the report of a public meeting, unfortunately too long for quotation and impossible effectively to abridge, which well exemplifies this kind of authority. The speaker was not an orator, in the ordinary acceptation of the term. He was a public man of much force of character, whose course of action had been objectionable to a large body of the organised work-

# The Crowd in Peace and War

men of a great city. He had the courage to call a meeting of his critics, which he addressed at length. The meeting was at first noisy and openly hostile to him. My newspaper report says that "verbal hot shot" was fired at him from all sides of the hall. He began by taking up a manly and courageous attitude. He adopted great plainness of speech. His instinct rather than any plan led him to put forward first certain broad statements on which he and the crowd were certainly agreed. They of course began to cheer. Gradually he thus got hold of them, but it was half an hour before his hold was secure. Then he insinuated rather than stated some of the points of view to which they had been opposed, but did not dwell on them and quickly returned to matters of general human agreement. When he had them well in hand and all their sympathies were captured he explained his policy and they accepted it with cheers and sent him away after two hours' speech, covered with such glory and honour as was in their power to bestow. Public men who can accomplish such a result possess the elements of crowd-compelling power. More qualities are needed, but that quality is essential.

Once I had occasion to watch the rapid and masterful effect of the intervention of a single man at a critical moment. It was in the capital of a Central American state at a time of revolution. The city was being besieged, or rather attacked from one side, and the attacking force had had things their own way and were in possession of the outskirts of the city. Everybody expected it to fall next day and the defending force was on the point of surrender. By good luck, however, the Governor of the city either fell ill or ran away. At all events the direction of

## Crowd-Compellers

affairs passed into the hands of the deputy-governor. No sooner was he in control than the whole atmosphere of the city changed as though by magic. The fighting men became full of hope, the citizens lost their terrors. Trenches were dug in the night, breastworks of sacks filled with earth were raised. Every one—Spaniard, nigger, Indian, Chinaman, and European, and the various half-castes or quarter-castes of all five—worked together. When the dawn broke fighting began again. The couple of guns which had been fetched by the rebels—gunners, ammunition and all—on contract from the United States, were presently silenced. The fighting was of the most desperate character. Out of 5000 men engaged on both sides less than 2000 were not killed or wounded by the end of the day, but then the city was saved and the rebels were finally chased away. The result was produced by one man who authentically possessed the crowd-compelling gift. He was not an orator, so far as I know, but he was a born leader of men, and such need no gift of oratory.

Oratory, of course, is a powerful helper in obtaining crowd-control, for, as Bagehot says, "An orator has a dominion over the critical instant, and the consequences of the decisions taken during that instant may last long after the orator and the audience have both passed away." Orators, however, commonly belong to the crowd-exponent class, and are no less moved and no more masters of themselves than are the audience. Crowd-compelling orators are those, "who moving others are themselves as stone."

Such was Disraeli, such also in some degree was Mr. Joseph Chamberlain; such sometimes was Mr. Gladstone.

# The Crowd in Peace and War

Indeed the highest type of crowd-compeller has not often been an orator. They are usually silent men. Mr. Chamberlain in the latter part of his ministerial career was rightly regarded as the incarnation of the idea of British imperialism. He was even supposed to have been the inventor of that idea. As a matter of fact he was nothing of the sort. Lord Rosebery had been shaping and urging the ideal of our "wise, tolerant, and unaggressive Empire" while Mr. Chamberlain was a little Englander, taking, for instance, a determining part in compelling our withdrawal from the Sudan after the Gordon catastrophe. Both in that policy and in his later imperialism he was acting as a crowd-exponent, voicing the existing ideas of his party, not imposing his own views upon them. But when he became a convert to protection, or rather when he threw off the control of Cobdenism (to which he had submitted) and reverted openly to his own original protective views, he was no longer the voice of any formed party, but became the exponent of his own personal opinions. Thereupon he set forth on a new career as crowd-compeller. He had thenceforward to form his own crowd, to make it obedient to his will, to help it to grow and attain power, and he so far succeeded that before long it had become large enough and strong enough to capture the organisation of the Unionist party and to include the bulk of that party within the limits of his newly formed body. From that time on, so long as Mr. Chamberlain remained active in political life, the Unionist party was in fact a Tariff-Reform body, subject to his control and existing to enable him to accomplish the ends he had in view. Few will deny that if his physical health had been maintained his party would



## Crowd-Compellers

have captured a majority of the voters and he would have been enabled, in consequence of the force of his own dominant personality, to impose his will upon the whole country.

The crowd-compeller does not listen for public opinion that he may guide his steps by it; on the contrary he is more likely to resemble the Claverhouse of Sir Walter Scott, whom he described as "profound in politics and "imbued, of course, with that disregard for individual "rights which its intrigues usually generate." The crowd-compeller forces the public to adopt his opinion; he makes that to be public opinion. His own energy of nature impels him to project himself upon the crowd, to realise himself in its larger life, to make it incorporate him, to make his brain the centre and originating power of its brainless body. Nor is there any limit to the human area within which he desires to reign. Instinct impels him to impregnate everybody with his views. He must go forward conquering and to conquer as long as his own individual life lasts. Nor does that suffice him, but he must, as far as he can, so organise the crowd which he forms as to make it incorporate his policy and continue to pursue it long after his own physical presence has vanished. It is thus that in the past men have first made themselves kings, and then have founded dynasties, which lasted as long as the original impulse continued, or till some great successor arose to infuse new life into the old ideal or replace it by a new one. The business of the historian, therefore, is not merely to trace the ideal or crowd-mind from age to age operating on the individual, but to observe the individual mind expressed in the crowd. Public opinion is never the opinion of the average man, for there

# The Crowd in Peace and War

exists no such person. It is the opinion or group of opinions imposed upon the public by a succession of thinkers. The character of the public in any age and country is determined by that of existing and past thinkers, who have operated on the crowd and obtained control over it. The value of public opinion is thus to be measured by the quality of the leaders who control or have controlled it. To measure the value of German public opinion in 1914 we have only to name the men whose opinions it voiced — Treitschke, Nietzsche, Bernhardi, the Emperor William II. It is not the nation we must indict, but the compellers who dominated it. All nations are natural born fools!

The manifestation of great crowd-compellers on the political world-stage is a rare phenomenon, such giants requiring not merely capacity but opportunity. A man's gifts and powers of insight must match his day. If the French Revolution had not gone before him Napoleon might have remained obscure. In our own time the number of great crowd-compellers, such as Bismarck and Cavour, have been few indeed. Cecil Rhodes did not rise to the full height of a career. We may suspect the existence of crowd-compelling powers of high degree in Lord Kitchener, but the fact, if it be a fact, will only be fully revealed in process of time. That he was called for imperatively at a critical moment by the national voice is a strong indication that the people recognised in him above all others the leader of whom they were in need, and such recognition is often sound insight.

But the crowd-compelling power on a smaller scale is, in England at any rate, not a very rare quality. It is

## Crowd-Compellers

the power to lead men, a priceless heritage of certain classes in this country, where it is probably more richly possessed than in any other. This power is essentially hereditary, though developed by education. Unless the germ of it is in a man at his birth it can never be implanted in him. No amount of free education, of open competitive examinations, of selection by vote or any other agency, will enable individuals to become leaders of men unless they are born so to be. That is why good officers seldom rise from the ranks, unless the right type of man has first been compelled by circumstances to enter them. India was conquered and is held by the British subaltern, who as naturally leads the Indian soldier as a sheep-dog controls a flock. We do in fact in England breed and train such a class for our army, navy, and civil service, but unfortunately not for politics. We select politicians by a kind of competitive examination in stump-speaking, with results extraordinary.

I was once returning from Jamaica on a Royal Mail steamship, and there was a young British officer among the passengers. One day the amusements' committee arranged for sports, and one of the incidents was to be a tug-of-war. It was amusing to watch the confusion attending the formation of the string of competitors, the false starts at pulling, and other little misfires. When things were at their worst up came the young subaltern and took the business in hand. Immediately all the competitors became orderly; they gladly did exactly what he bade them. His orders were brief and clear and the summons to begin pulling came from his mouth like a pistol-shot. If it had been his own men he was ordering, the

## The Crowd in Peace and War

instinctive obedience would have been self-explained; but it was a mere casual crowd of passenger-idlers. Yet they obeyed him instantly and instinctively because he possessed by nature the power to command, which had also been developed in him by some practice. This power of command, accompanied as it always is by capacity for individual initiative when required, is the most valuable attribute of the upper class in any nation. Upon it, far more than upon the individual capacity of working men, the success of a nation depends, not merely in war but in all categories of activity, and not least in manufacture and commerce. A good leader can get better results out of second-rate human material than a bad leader out of a better class, for behind skill and knowledge, giving them most of their efficiency, lie spirit and the power of co-ordination, and these belong not to the hands but to the brain of a leader. That nation is and always must be greatest in which the power of leadership is commonest, best acknowledged, and most employed.

## CHAPTER VII

### CROWD-EXPONENTS

THE crowd-compeller, as we have thus seen, is the type of man who produces a movement and either forms or gives a new direction to a nation, a party, or any sort of crowd. But when the movement is once strong and tending towards the attainment of its object, or has attained it, that movement in its turn, sometimes during the lifetime of its originator, oftenest after his death, produces new leaders, who have not made it but who have been made by it, and these men are crowd-exponents. They are often of a type that would have horrified the crowd-compeller to whose activity they in fact owe their existence. The crowd-exponent is the man who feels by sympathetic insight and mere sensitiveness of nature as the crowd feels or is going to feel, and who expresses in clear language the emotion of the dumb organism. For all the ideas of a crowd are necessarily of a vague emotional sort and can only be expressed by them in the form of shouts or actions of approval or dissent. The crowd loves anyone who will express its ideas — “just what we’ve been thinking, — “that’s true — go it, old man! — you’re right!” Such are the normal responses of a crowd to its momentarily fittest exponent. He may be a speaker, or a writer, or a group of newspaper writers — but whatever he is, he

# The Crowd in Peace and War

is the voice of the crowd and his utterance is really theirs. He in fact borrows his thunder from them and gives back to them what he has himself received from them.

Hence the chief quality of a crowd-exponent is sensitiveness, and the faculty he most needs is the power of speech. He is by nature akin to an artist; his is the stuff of which poets are made. Crowd-enthusiasm is the atmosphere in which he lives and breathes and has his being. It is not surprising, therefore, that he should often be an orator, nor that most entrancing orators should be of his type. His business and joy is not to think out the solution of some difficult social problem in the privacy of his study, and then go forth and proclaim a new gospel to an unwilling world. He waits till that work has been done and the crowd has already taken form; then he plunges into the thick of it and says with eloquence, power, and enthusiasm that which the folk about him are dimly and vaguely feeling. Whereupon they raise him aloft with loud applause and worship him like a god because his voice has given them words and enabled the crowd to realise its own mighty, if vague and ill-defined, existence and power.

To the born crowd-exponent the voice of the people is indubitably the voice of God. The great men of this sort do not go forth to find out by laborious research what a people are thinking, and having discovered it then consciously adopt and voice the public opinion. It is only the little men who are always listening at the key-hole of the public to catch some secret of its tones. The great men catch the opinion of the public as they breathe the air; they cannot avoid sharing it. It bears them

## Crowd-Exponents

away, willingly enough on their part as a rule, but whither it flows thither they must tend, even if that direction be the very opposite of the line they had previously been pursuing in the wake of their own judgment.

The greatest crowd-exponent of the nineteenth century, in England at all events and perhaps in the world, was the late Mr. Gladstone, though he likewise possessed crowd-compelling authority. I remember to have heard Dr. Ellicott, Bishop of Gloucester and Bristol, then a very old man, discussing with a contemporary the career of Mr. Gladstone as they had witnessed it. "I do not "accuse him," said the Bishop, "of having changed his "views to suit his politics; but I claim that his views have "completely changed on two or three occasions, so that "he came to advocate what before he had opposed, and "to oppose what before he had advocated; and I have "observed that these changes have approximately syn-"chronised with the altered interests of his politics." Notwithstanding these remarkable coincidences, it is generally admitted, even by those who did not agree with Mr. Gladstone, that he was not the man to change his views for the sake of personal advantage, and that his *volte face*, even on the Irish question, was not made against his beliefs, merely in order to attain power, but that he did actually and truly change his mind, on that and other occasions. He did so, not intentionally and to gain some end, but because he could not help it. He felt the current changing or about to change in the political field, and he instinctively turned towards the new ideal.

If he was thus conscious of the set of public opinion,

# The Crowd in Peace and War

he was even more keenly conscious of the mood of a crowd in whose presence he was actually speaking. Bagehot wrote of him:—

“No one half guides half follows the moods of his audience more quickly, more easily, than Mr. Gladstone. There is a little playfulness in his manner which contrasts with the dryness of his favourite topics and the intense gravity of his earnest character. . . . He receives his premises from his audience like a vapour and pours out his conclusions upon them like a flood. . . . He will imbibe from one audience different ‘vapour’ of premises from that which he will receive from another.”

In these respects Bagehot contrasted him with Chatham and Burke, who were of the crowd-compelling sort, but the passage is too long for quotation.<sup>1</sup> The contrast between him and Disraeli was the most remarkable modern example of the opposition of two types of leader. The one speaking the voice of the crowd and impassioned with all its enthusiasms, its morals, and many of its prejudices; the other expressing only so much of his own personal opinions as he thought fit to reveal, never carried away by emotion, nor measuring men and events by the yard-stick of any crowd’s morality. Small wonder that the two men were unsympathetic to one another, and that one of them could define the other, after receiving from him a douche of the crowd’s passion, as a “sophistical rhetorician, inebriated with the exuberance of his own verbosity.”

Notwithstanding Disraeli’s satire and the distrust of many of his best contemporaries, it is now not disputed

<sup>1</sup> “Biographical Studies,” London, 1881, p. 95.



## Crowd-Exponents

that Mr. Gladstone was a really great man who lived and acted in pursuit of high ideals, and whose name is secure of repute among the greatest leaders of the nineteenth century. If he was a crowd-exponent he was among the best and noblest examples of the type.

There are others of meaner sort who allow the emotions derived from the crowd they are addressing to run away with them and make them say the thing that on reflection they would wish not to have said. "Although 'the English,'" wrote Kinglake, "are by nature wise in 'action, yet, being vehement and careless in their way 'of applauding loud words, they encourage their orators 'and those also who address them in writing, to be strenuous rather than wise; and the result is, that these teachers, trying always to be more and more forcible, grow 'blind to logical dangers, and leap with headlong joy into 'the pit which reasoners call the *absurdum*. Then, and 'not without joyous laughter, reaction begins."

There is a yet meaner type of crowd-exponent even than these who merely at times lose their heads. There is the leader who is a conscious hypocrite and who follows, and knowingly follows, the crowd he pretends to guide. A crowd, excited about some local matter, came running down a street. A man in the front rank stopped to speak with a friend he was passing on the pavement. After a brief greeting he hurried off, saying, "I can't stop 'with you. I must run ahead of the crowd. I am their 'Leader!" There are plenty of public men of this sort also, whose politics consist in anticipating the direction in which the crowd will move and then loudly directing

# The Crowd in Peace and War

it to go that way. The unguided crowd is always a fool, and the man that follows in front of it instead of guiding it must therefore often look like a fool also.

I have referred above to the German publicists, Treitschke and the others, as the crowd-compellers who impregnated Germany with the vile political ideals from which the world is now suffering misery. But in fact these men were not true crowd-compellers but striking examples of a not uncommon type of prophet. They merely caught from a smaller crowd the notions which they expressed and imposed on a larger. They caught the crowd-spirit of the provincial and backward Prussian upper class group and they gave it currency throughout Germany and imposed it upon the whole nation as the German ideal; and they were able to do this because political developments had made all Germany a new big political unit with Prussia at the top. The new Germany seeking for some ideal, upon which the diverse and previously discordant parts now composing the Empire could unite, was not unnaturally attracted by the notions which had carried Prussia to success, and this abstract ideal of might, hand in hand with the agitation which accompanied the formation of an Imperial navy (the Army not being in structure imperial but local) effected the spiritual unification of Germany, after the political unification had been accomplished. The philosophers therefore, though appearing to be crowd-compellers and receiving much of the credit and applause rendered to such, were in fact merely Prussian crowd-exponents, with all the feebleness, the narrowness, the emotional vice of their popular philosophy.

## Crowd-Exponents

In our own day the crowd has become more prominent as an active force, because better organised and more conscious of its own existence and power than ever before, except perhaps in the case of the Parisian crowd during the French Revolution. It follows that we have with us and can study whenever we open our newspapers the sayings and behaviour of no inconsiderable number of very efficient crowd-exponents. The crowd is always quick to recognise an efficient exponent. It does not take him long to attain a position of leadership, or apparent leadership, provided he possesses the needful gifts of sensitiveness and emotional speech. Thus the crowd merely as it were sniffed around Mr. Winston Churchill, recognised him immediately as one of its own sort, wagged its tail, and came to heel. The Welsh crowd as readily accepted Mr. Lloyd George and he had little difficulty in obtaining corresponding recognition when he came to occupy English platforms. He is, in fact, the most prominent and powerful crowd-exponent in our day. He is the visible and audible incarnation of popular tendencies. His emotions respond as sensitively to those of a crowd as ever a barometer to changes in atmospheric pressure. He has never manifested any trace of an individual mind or of independent thought. He has added nothing to the stock of political ideas, but he has perfectly voiced the ideas of the crowd by which he acts and from which he draws both his emotions and his power. It is said that in private life he is the most reasonable and moderate of men. No one would guess it from his public appearances. As a solicitor it is related that he proved himself to be a master in bringing opponents to a com-

# The Crowd in Peace and War

promise. No one handled angry men better. Each felt, and probably felt truly, that he had the sympathetic understanding of the intermediary negotiator. This was due to his sensitively sympathetic nature. The same sensitive sympathy puts him in immediate touch with the emotions of a public meeting. When he addresses an audience of bankers in the City of London, he cannot fail to catch their tone, and both the ideas he expresses and the form in which he puts them are agreeable to his audience. The strongest warning ever plainly uttered to Germany came from his lips in the City of London, and then also he was voicing the opinions of the people he was addressing. In fact it may be suspected that the feeling of the audience led him to state their case with somewhat less restraint than he might have used had his audience been colder. For the same reason when he went down to Limehouse and held up Lord Rothschild and other prominent citizens of London, no less patriotic than himself, to scorn and ridicule, he was merely voicing the ignorant prejudices of the crowd in the hall, and gathering the incense of cheers and enthusiasm from them, not because of the wisdom and enlightenment they were drawing from him, but because he was saying what they felt. Yet the same man who had abused the capitalists of England throughout the length and breadth of the country from all kinds of popular platforms, was able, without the least difficulty, to become their spokesman and executive officer when war broke out and the need for co-operation with the whole body of capitalists became imperative. No one was ever a more docile and consequently a more efficient Chancellor of the Exchequer

## Crowd-Exponents

under such circumstances. He had no prejudices. He was there to help men come together, to listen with sweet reasonableness to the wise, to catch their tone, to give effect to their efforts for the public good. Only a really great financier capable of mastering in argument the biggest minds in the financial world, of seeing further and more deeply into the enormous problems which had to be solved and solved at once, could have been more efficient than he was with his docile and sympathetic nature and his desire to discover and do the best. Finally, when party differences and oppositions were submerged under the overmastering tide of patriotic union with which the whole country moved against the foreign peril, when, in fact, party crowds disappeared and were fused together within the great single national crowd made supreme by the war, no one better than Mr. Lloyd George expressed the emotions of that crowd also. He caught its spirit at once and voiced its emotions, nor did he hesitate, or could he have brought himself to hesitate, speaking for it on February 28th, 1915, or rather it speaking in him, to tell the labour crowd, of which he himself had so often before been the applauded voice, some very home truths not pleasant for it to hear; and this he did not as, by personal and intellectual conviction, holding opposite views to theirs, but because another, and for the time being an opposed and superior crowd, was finding voice in him.

Mr. Lloyd George is a more perfect example of the highest type of crowd-exponent pure and simple than was Mr. Gladstone. Both incorporated the emotions of their party or audience with similar ease. Mr. Lecky made the profound observation that Mr. Gladstone's

# The Crowd in Peace and War

vindictiveness was "more frequently directed against "classes or parties than against individuals," an indication of the absorption of his emotions in those of his crowd, for crowds envisage crowds or crowd-representatives, not individuals. The same observation is likewise true of Mr. Lloyd George. But Mr. Gladstone was besides a man of powerful individuality and had strong personal views of his own on certain matters, and those he never compromised at the bidding of any crowd, but rather showed a skilful crowd-compulsion in avoiding the raising of issues which would have placed his crowd-sympathies and personal convictions in opposition to one another. Not impossibly Mr. Lloyd George may suffer from a like fine disability.

The crowd-exponent, then, is the voice and expression of the emotional crowd. Of course he must be an orator, because he must possess the qualities of sensitiveness, sympathy, and emotion which are essential to an orator, and he must command the flow of language which enables him to state easily and at once the emotions he experiences. He is likely also to be a phrase-coiner. He does not really guide the crowd; he does not enlighten it; he does not drive it. It enlightens and drives him, so that his words and urgencies are not his own but those of the crowd with which, at the time of speaking, he is in hypnotic relation. The oratorical impulse disorganises a speaker's own mind. The higher faculties of reason cannot operate except with calm. But the orator neither conceives nor delivers his address with calm mind. His emotions are excited. His words are planned and spoken with excitement. This with us is as true of speeches

## Crowd-Exponents

made in the House of Commons as from a public platform. It is one of the peculiar characteristics of the House of Commons that a member does not, as in some other deliberative assemblies, ascend a tribune and address the whole house, but speaks from his place on the floor. Louis Philippe, conversing with Victor Hugo, described the consequences of our method. He said:—

“Have you seen the English Parliament? You speak “from your place, standing in the midst of your own “party. You are carried away; you say more often “than not what others think instead of what you think “yourself. There is a magnetic communication. You “are subjected to it. You rise (here the King rose and “imitated the gesture of an orator speaking in Parlia- “ment). The assembly ferments all round and close to “you; you let yourself go. On this side somebody says, ““England has suffered a gross insult”; and on that side, ““with gross indignity.’ It is simply applause that is “sought on both sides—nothing more. But this is bad; “it is dangerous; it is baleful. In France our Tribune, “which isolates the orator, has many advantages.”

According to Bagehot it used to be said that “Mr. “Pitt thought more of the manner in which his measures “would strike the House of Commons than of the manner “in which, when carried, they would work.” Thus the strength of the party system with us may owe a good deal to the mere arrangement of seats in the House of Commons.

A crowd-exponent need not necessarily be a demagogue, though the temptation to sink to that level is strong. There was nothing of the demagogue about Mr. Gladstone,

# The Crowd in Peace and War

or any of the really great crowd-exponents whose names are held in honour. As a crowd is merely emotional, its emotions may be either good or bad or both. It is the dwelling-place of ideals; it is likewise the home of prejudice and greed. All crowds are normally hostile to all other crowds. That is in the nature of the beast. It follows that a crowd-exponent may either voice the ideals or the prejudices of a crowd. It is the latter that is the function of a demagogue. Bismarck, who was not in this matter an impartial observer, stated that the support given to the Social-democracy in Germany in his time "rested on the fact that the judgment of the masses "is sufficiently stultified and undeveloped to allow them, "with the assistance of their own greed, to be continually "caught by the rhetoric of clever and ambitious leaders." This I believe to be a false conclusion. It is not the crowd that is caught by the demagogue, but the demagogue that is caught by the crowd. We saw something of the kind happen to Mr. Lloyd George when he went down to Limehouse. He became the voice of all that is worst in class-greed and class-prejudice. He did not instil those prejudices into his audience. He found them already there and could not resist the temptation to give them voice. Such is the danger to which crowd-exponents are constitutionally exposed.

Ambition is not the main motive power that urges the crowd-compeller to action. It may be a concurrent impulse, but the determining shock that sets him in action is his own forcefully originated idea. He has some new thing to accomplish; he wills to drive the world in some new direction. He is seized by an irresist-



## Crowd-Exponents

ible impulse to act. He can realize himself in no other way and must dominate a crowd to that end. But ambition is the main spring of a crowd-exponent's life. He cannot and does not desire to resist the impulse within him to be a figure-head, or the trumpet of another's voice. There is the great crowd hungering for expression, ready to acclaim with shouts and wonder the man that will express its emotions; and he, feeling those same emotions, longs to be that voice. The approval of the crowd is the breath of his life. Instinct impels him to speak; applause guides his words. All his individual qualities and relationships melt in the fire of that passion. Once he has tasted its savour he cannot live without the incense of crowd-approval. If they will not follow him he must at least run on in front of them. "I am their leader!" This in fact is what is called ambition — the desire to be the voice and representative of a crowd, not merely its official representative — a type with which we have next to deal — but its spiritual representative, feeling with it, quivering in every fibre with its life and emotions, expressing those and getting back from the crowd that recognition which it always gives to the speaker who becomes its voice. The crowd-exponent is the typically ambitious man.

## CHAPTER VIII

### CROWD-REPRESENTATIVES

WITH crowd-representatives we may deal more summarily, because as the name implies they are picturesque figureheads rather than individual forces. They may indeed also belong to one of the preceding categories, but, in so far as that is the case, they do not differ from other crowd-compellers or crowd-exponents. A constitutional king is a crowd-representative. As such he is a kind of official crowd-exponent, but more rarely he may be a crowd-compeller. The King of the Belgians has shown himself a most efficient and powerful leader of men, who could hold his nation as in the hollow of his hand or lead it whither without him it would not have gone. Such kings are exceptions; according to one modern theory of constitutional government they are held to be not even desirable in ordinary times. The constitutional king is the personification of his people. He speaks with their voice; he acts for them; he stands for them in the sight of the world. He performs these functions only in his public capacity. In private life he may be what he pleases, provided that the public is unaware. All that the public can of a certainty know of him must conform to the public sentiment. He must at any rate appear to feel as the public feels on all occasions. His known acts must conform to the public will. The

## Crowd-Representatives

king, therefore, is not an individual but himself a crowd, and not any crowd but the particular crowd which is the nation he incorporates. Hence all the apparatus of ministers, ministerial responsibility, and the like, to ensure the conformity of his public words and actions with the sentiment of the crowd. Hence his messages of sympathy on the occasion of such tragedies as the public takes notice of. A thousand individuals may be drowned at sea in the normal average number of months, one here one there, the crowd takes no notice; but if a ship goes down and drowns a thousand at one time, the public, feeling its great self perceptibly wounded, cries its regrets and a royal missive gives them expression. So with mining tragedies: each day takes its toll, and even the local newspapers scarcely record the recurring deaths of units, though in a year their total number far exceeds that of those slain in great accidents. But let a great accident kill at once enough men to look like a crowd, the public feels the wound, and its royal spokesman expresses the public emotion. So when a crowd-representative dies the public is again moved, because it is wounded, and there follows a more or less public funeral with royalty present in person or by attorney.

Again when the King opens Parliament or performs some such public function, he acts for the crowd and marks the nature of the occasion as one affecting the organised social body. When Milton published "Paradise Lost" no king proclaimed the event, nor would it seem congruous for royalty to take official notice of even the greatest achievement of an independent non-representative individual. The publication by Darwin of the

# The Crowd in Peace and War

"Origin of Species" was a far more important event in the world's history than, let us say, the opening of docks at Liverpool; but the one was the act of an individual addressing individuals, the other the concern of a crowd: hence the propriety of the intervention of royalty to give public recognition in the latter case but not in the former.

If sin be defined as an action done by an individual to the detriment of the crowd to which he belongs, and the largest category of sins is certainly of that sort, it follows that an individual who in fact incorporates his crowd and cannot act but in conformity with it, cannot sin. A king, therefore, can do no wrong when he is acting publicly as king; whilst constitutional securities prevent him from publicly acting in any other way. Thus too the Pope is of necessity infallible, from the point of view of his crowd, when he speaks *ex cathedra* and *de fide*, that is to say under the restrictive control of all those securities which in fact provide that he shall voice the sentiments of the crowd which he officially incorporates. His infallibility cannot, *ex hypothesi*, extend beyond the limits of the crowd for which and by which he speaks, like the infallibility which in the law courts belongs to a final Court of Appeals, the difference being that the one applies to the domain of faith, the other to the domain of affairs. But faith is the principal affair of a church, so that the analogy between the two is complete. The judgment uttered is for men to guide their actions by; as to its soundness the future will more or less impartially decide.

The murder of a king is a more heinous offence than the murder of an ordinary individual, because it is a more direct injury done to a crowd, and this is true whether

## Crowd-Representatives

he be a hereditary or an elected monarch. Here is the opinion of a prominent American statesman on the subject, regarded from his own local point of view:—

“There is no conceivable crime so atrocious as the causeless “murder of the chosen ruler of a free people. Such crimes rise “infinitely higher than crimes against the individual. They “are crimes against humanity, civilisation, and the country’s “life; against society, law, and liberty. They are a blot upon “free institutions, a stain upon the flag. They undermine the “happiness and well-being of the people. They lower our “standing and character in the opinion of mankind. They are “blows aimed at the Presidency and self-government; at the “town meeting, the state, and the nation; at all our institutions, “and everything which finds expression in the words ‘Our “‘Country.’ ”

What moved this gentleman’s indignation was not the destruction of an individual’s life or the grief thereby brought on other individuals who loved him, but solely the wound inflicted on the crowd. Every word of his invective is directed against one who injures a crowd, not one who merely slays a man. As crowd-opinion determines the relative heinousness of this or the other crime, it naturally estimates as worse the crimes done against itself. From the individual’s point of view murder is alike murder whoever is killed, but the crowd of course thinks otherwise.

I have often wondered what his national crowd comes in process of time to look like to a king, who is always blared at by it with the same anthem, always halloed at with the same cheers; who always beholds it under the flutter of flags, lined along streets, or massed in open

# The Crowd in Peace and War

places; who always addresses to it the same platitudes and receives from it the same reactions. Once, indeed, during a few days it fell to my lot in a foreign country to be in the immediate neighbourhood of royalty during a national festival, and to behold the crowd as they beheld it and practically from their standpoint. Its astonishing uniformity of appearance was what struck me. It was an extraordinarily loyal crowd to look at, and always shouted when the king and queen were in sight. There was no apparent variation in its aspect or its behaviour. It possessed one emotion and one only. But I could not fail to observe the great respect with which its sovereigns treated it. Their deep obeisances to it from the palace balcony overlooking a vast city square were even more profound than those with which they themselves had just been saluted by the courtiers assembled in the room that opened on to the balcony. In fact both salutations were given to the same entity, for it was the nation incorporated in the sovereigns that the courtiers saluted, and it was a specimen portion of the nation itself to which the sovereigns did their large courtesies.

A Judge, when on the bench, is another type of crowd-representative. In pronouncing judgment upon an offender he speaks with the voice of the public; but in order that he may surely do so he is surrounded by all manner of securities and limitations. The opinions expressed by a judge in private life possess no more authority than those of any other educated individual of equal ability. It is only when he occupies the position of crowd-representative and is conditioned by the securities which crowd-organisation supplies that his opinions have

## Crowd-Representatives

the value with which the crowd invests them, as uttered on its behalf and in conformity with its views.

Elected representatives of the people are those about whom the public knows most and whose representative capacity they most clearly understand. Some of them have reached the positions they occupy by crowd-compulsion, more by crowd-exposition, and yet more by personal relations with leading individuals, who are able to put them forward and procure their election. For when it comes to the act of election, all any crowd can do is to choose between the two or three individuals who have succeeded in obtaining nomination, and efficient nomination is not made by the crowd but by the organisers who control it. It follows that amongst the elected personages who represent crowds the large majority possess none of the qualities of crowd-compellers or crowd-exponents. They do not in their heart and nature express its emotions, either because they have imposed theirs upon it or because they have actually absorbed its emotions and made them their own. They are merely individuals who have adopted a set of opinions for public and practical use, while their own true opinions remain unaffected, or locked in the privacy of their own hearts. Thus the following conversation is related to have taken place between two famous leaders of their respective parties about twenty years ago. "Has it never happened "to you," inquired the first, "among all your mutations of "opinion, to feel that in fact the principles of our party "are more in accordance with your own views than are "those of the party to which you belong?" "No!" replied the other, "because, of the two, the principles of

# The Crowd in Peace and War

“your party have always seemed to me perhaps a trifle  
“more inept.”

Let me repeat that official crowd-representatives are not the same as the crowd-exponents whom we have discussed above. Crowd-exponents are those who instinctively voice the emotion of a crowd and do so because they cannot help it. It is the immediate emotion of the crowd that they express, and, as nothing is more fickle, so their expression is chameleon-like in its variation. Nevertheless they themselves are always honest. But the great national public is slower to change in proportion to its size, and does in fact possess a foundation of more or less settled opinion. The crowd-representative is called into being, and hedged around with conditions, in order that he may consistently express this settled opinion. According to the representative's position and social function, so are the forces organised about him which compel and limit his utterance. Avenues of information are opened to him which put him in direct connection with the crowd itself. He is in touch with the crowd-exponents and with the whole body of crowd-representatives, so that when he speaks officially he does so with a very much larger brain backing him than that which is contained in his own head. President Wilson's idea seems to be that the head of a nation has no business to do more than voice the already formed opinion of his people. He is not to guide and instruct them, not to show them the way, but chiefly to follow in their wake. “In a democracy,” he says, “it is for the people to decide upon national duty. “It is for those who stand at their head to endeavour to “express those things that seem to rise out of the con-



## Crowd-Representatives

“science, the hope, and the purpose of the great body of  
“the people themselves.”

One crowd communicates and deals with another by means of crowd-representatives, the mode of communication being described as diplomacy. The term is generally confined to relations between nations, but in fact all negotiations between crowds are of the kind called diplomatic. There is as much diplomacy in dealings between organised bodies of masters and men as between nations. Even the communications between two cricket clubs in the matter of arranging matches are diplomatic. Like qualities are needed in negotiators, whether named secretaries or ambassadors. It is merely the field of action that is larger or smaller; the character of the action is the same whenever two crowds are in communication with one another.

Seeing that crowds are not of the same kind as individuals, but are beings of another sort, they are not governed by the same principles of action nor by the same moral law as individuals. It follows that the relations of crowds are not like those of individuals, and that not all the tests of honour, truthfulness, candour, and the like, by which the relations of individuals to one another are judged, apply to the relations of crowds. If Machiavelli did not understand the nature of crowds, he at any rate truthfully perceived the conditions under which diplomacy is carried on by crowd-representatives, and nothing needs to be added to his exposition of that matter. International politics are substantially to-day what they were in the sixteenth century, except in so far as the whole of humanity has since then proceeded — a very short distance —

# The Crowd in Peace and War

toward the organisation of a world-controlling public opinion. The utter feebleness of that restraint upon nations is pathetically demonstrated by the ruins of Louvain and the battered cathedral of Rheims.

Among men of honour it is recognised that to dupe a fellow-man is a mean and disgraceful action. To dupe, however, has often been one of the great aims of diplomacy. Hear what Frederick the Great had to say about it. "Comme parmi les hommes l'on est convenu que "duper son semblable était une action criminelle, l'on a "été obligé de chercher un autre terme qui adoucit la "chose, et c'est le mot de Politique que l'on a choisi infal- "liblement. Ce mot n'a été choisi qu'en faveur des "Souverains, parceque décemment l'on ne peut pas nous "traiter de coquins et de fripons; quoi qu'il en soit, voici "au vrai ce que je pense sur la Politique." The reason why you cannot treat as a rascal a king acting officially is because he is a crowd, and you "cannot bring an indictment against" a crowd. A crowd may and often does act viciously or wickedly from the point of view of individuals, but it is not subject to the laws or to the morals which restrain individuals, nor can it be punished in the same way. Hence crowds and their official representatives as such stand outside the ordinary moral law, and so therefore does diplomacy in the present condition of the world. Thoughtless persons sometimes talk about the behaviour proper to a Christian nation. There is no such thing as a Christian nation; there are only Christian individuals. The Christ that shall save the nations has not yet been revealed to them. When wars cease for ever His coming will be at hand.

## Crowd-Representatives

Besides the crowd-representatives who are born and bred to the business, or those, like judges, diplomatists, and the like who are educated and selected for the positions they have to fill, there is also the large body of representative men who, as we have just noted, are merely elected by different kinds of constituencies for the positions they have to fill. These men are not prepared for those positions by any system of education, nor are they any longer taken from a class of men so prepared by birth and bringing up. It is quite possible for any active and pushing individual with a glib tongue to thrust himself forward into public notice, and sooner or later he will find some way to enter public life in a representative capacity. This casual and unscientific system has been suffered to come into being, and to maintain itself under present circumstances, because we live in a time of great crowd-selfconsciousness and crowd-power. The only way in which a crowd can operate is through representatives who act in harmony with its views; and the system, not so much of election, but of re-election at relatively frequent intervals, secures the subservience of the representative individual to the crowd he represents, and thus gives dominion to the crowd in proportion to the power of its elected representatives. We shall have more to say on this matter when we come to deal with the question of government. Here we have only to consider the effect of his representative position on the representative himself.

In the first place the whole process of candidature is a great education to him. He has frequent opportunities of addressing the constituent body, and on every occasion

## The Crowd in Peace and War

it is his business to make the crowd feel that he is one in heart with it. Its reaction upon him is therefore liable to be much stronger than his action upon it, for the crowd before him does not derive many of its passions from him, but rather from the newspapers and from other agencies that form and spread public opinion, his own speeches (unless he be of the rare crowd-compelling sort) having but small formative power on the views of the crowd compared with the power exercised by the great drifts and pressures of national and local opinion. It follows that the candidate is more markedly fashioned by the constituency than the constituency is modified by the candidate; so that after the operation has been continued through a sufficient length of time the candidate may as a rule be expected to emerge "a good party man," who can be relied on to conform in all his public statements and known acts to the party standards. He thus comes to be in fact the incorporation for practical purposes of his crowd, and may grow to be regarded as almost identified with it. It is said, and said with truth, that "the significance of shaking hands with a Senator of the United States is that it "is a convenient and labour-saving way of shaking hands "with two or three million people. The impressiveness "of the Senator's Washington voice, the voice on the floor "of the Senate, consists in the mystical undertone, — "the chorus in it, — multitudes in smoking cities, men and "women, rich and poor, who are speaking when this man "speaks, and who are silent when he is silent, in the "government of the United States."

Such does the elected crowd-representative appear in the public eye, and such the public believes him to be.

## Crowd-Representatives

In actual fact, in the privacy of his own home, he may be an altogether different person from the public character he plays. But he must so play the character as to deceive the constituency; hence what Mr. Bonar Law has called "the make-believe that is part of the daily life of all politicians." He may in fact be immoral, a gambler, a drunkard, a terror in his home, or vicious in one or more of a thousand ways; but as long as his actions are not officially known, not publicly stated in a form which the law of libel can deal with, so long may his constituency remain blind, and be content to hold him as a model of all the virtues and prejudices it applauds. So again a man may cherish in private what religious opinions or vacuum of opinion he pleases. In public the mere crowd-representative will have to conform so far as to satisfy public opinion. Take for instance a newspaper of high class — let us say the "Times." It has a definite attitude toward religious questions and may be relied on to express in its editorial columns certain views in relation to them. Does anyone suppose that those are the private views of the proprietors, editors, and writers of the paper? They may be or they may not; the only thing certain about them is that they are supposed and indeed known to be the views of the public that reads the paper, and probably also more or less of the actual writer employed to set them forth. Just as a newspaper has to voice the views of its public, so does an elected representative man. Rare is the person who can openly adhere to his own opinion, when it is not the opinion of his constituency, and who can yet maintain himself as its accepted representative. So Lord Morley did for a time at Newcastle when there was an

## The Crowd in Peace and War

acknowledged divergence between him and his supporters on the question of the Eight-hour day. That such a divergence should long continue between a constituency and its representative is not often desirable. Usually one should convert the other or they should separate; but this consideration is beyond the scope of the present chapter.

## CHAPTER IX

### CROWD-ORGANISATION

REFERENCE has already been made at several points of our investigation to the different degrees of organisation which a crowd is capable of. Let us now for a brief space fix our attention directly on that question. The organisation of a crowd has three main purposes: to secure some degree of continuity and persistence to its emotions, to provide it with a substitute for the brain which it lacks, and to give it executive power, that is to say, power to give effect to its emotional desires and ideals in the region of human accomplishment and evolution.

An unorganised crowd or mob is purely destructive; it is without power to create or upbuild. A mob can destroy individuals, other mobs, or the work of men's hands. It can rush headlong like a mad creature upon an enemy and fight with the fury of a wild beast, yet even so it is very inefficient; a much smaller group of disciplined units can overpower it with relative ease, as a small body of police constables is able to demonstrate whenever called upon. Organisation therefore not merely directs the power of a crowd to some definite end, but greatly increases its efficiency.

No crowd, however, can organise itself. It must be organised by individuals who acquire its confidence or

## The Crowd in Peace and War

are able to impose their authority upon it. They may or may not be themselves moved by its emotions, though their authority will finally rest on the belief of the crowd that they are so. For it is only by possessing a common emotion that a crowd comes into being, and the main purpose of those who would organise, control, and direct it is to kindle and maintain that emotion at a high temperature and over a long period of time. But to maintain among the multitude that kind of steadfast volition which will tranquillize every mental tumult in the individual unit presupposes the infusion of a high ideal. This is the end of all noble propaganda and of all proud national tradition. It is their high purpose, whereunto all constitutions, patriotic and political enthusiasms, pride of race, *esprit de corps*, and the like emotions are to be cherished. "*Palton ke wasti!*" (for the batallion), cries the Gurkha and charges joyously to his death. "For God and King!" "For Fatherland!" "*Pour la France!*" "England expects every man to do his duty!" — all are beneficent crowd-cries, constraining the unit to high and noble deeds. The individual is guided by a complexity of motives. The crowd follows not motives but sentiments and ideals. Only an ideal can concentrate the desires of many into a common all-embracing effort; and ideals are kindled rather than taught. An individual may have a definite and reasoned purpose in what he does. A crowd has an emotional aim. The crowd-units, whatever their individual purposes in life, must, in so far as they belong to the crowd, sacrifice them in the interests of the emotional aim. He that loseth his separate individual life in the life of a crowd shall find another life in that. A crowd



## Crowd-Organisation

which cannot control its members to the common end will fail for lack of the organisation by which alone that control can become efficient.

Germany has given the world an example for all time of how the millions of a people can be organised and brought to act together for a common emotional end — *Deutschland über Alles!* The contrast is indeed great between the broken, humiliated German states after the battle of Jena and the unified, mighty, and efficient Empire that declared war on the world in July, 1914. That Empire was possessed by a single ideal — its own expansion. The number of Germans who did not share it were too few to count. By the purpose and compelling force of a succession of leading men the units and sub-crowds of the Germans had been inflamed with a common passion and at the same time organised into a tremendous integral whole, such as ancient Rome alone had dimly foreshadowed. Every agency had been directed towards the intended result. "Schools, army-discipline, scientific research, commercial resourcefulness, technical skill, governmental efficiency, social legislation — all were well-considered parts of one comprehensive, far-reaching, imperial programme." Every live nation has some kind of faith in its ideals and confidence in its destiny, but that is very different from a keen clear sense of national purpose; the difference lies in the organising brain that obtains control over the emotional but brainless human mass. For just as a cunning and masterful speaker can artfully kindle the enthusiasm of a public meeting and direct it whither he pleases, so can a great statesman obtain control over and direct the organisation of a people,

# The Crowd in Peace and War

and can train up and direct other individuals to assist and prolong his initiative through a succession of generations. Herein, indeed, consists the difference between a statesman and mere politicians. The politician is like some casual man standing on the deck of a rudderless ship which is proceeding unsteered among winds and currents, whithersoever it happens to head, he from time to time calling out empty orders to steer this way or that but only as he discovers the vessel itself to be proceeding; a statesman, on the contrary, resembles an able navigator who, directing his course by sun and stars and understanding the forms and forces of nature amidst which the vessel must make its way, steers the ship towards a determined port, using its engines as motive power, but himself actually supplying all the guidance.

Every organised crowd realises its own inefficiency and is ready to accept a leader as soon as one becomes visible to it; even a mere mob thus behaves. This is the veriest rudiment of crowd-organisation. So long as the leader stands alone his position is perilously insecure. Experience has proved that he must have the support of other individuals, themselves in more or less close relation with the whole or parts of the whole body, and out of this experience has now grown the well-understood system which in these days is the normal and probably necessary skeleton of all crowd-organisation, that namely of representative committees, and in the final resort of a small executive committee with a more or less authoritative chairman. Committees, by whatever name they are called, are the brains of crowds. It is by them that a crowd thinks; it

## Crowd-Organisation

is through them that it acts; it is in accordance with their decision that it is governed. A committee may have an acknowledged head by which it is despotically directed, or it may be a small deliberative body in which every member has some decisive influence. These are details about which the crowd need know nothing and we need not discuss. The essential fact for the crowd is that it should believe its executive Committee to be in sympathy with the crowd's own ideals and aims, and able and determined to devise and put into effect means for carrying out the crowd's desires. The committee may be called into existence in a variety of ways. Its members may be elected directly or indirectly, or nominated by other crowd-representatives. These are mere questions of detail. The one essential is that the feelings and aims of the committee as a whole and of the individual members of it, in so far as the crowd is cognisant of them, should be in harmony with those of the crowd itself.

The various precautions to keep the crowd and its governing and executive committee in harmony with one another are called the constitution of the crowd, and this constitution may either be plainly set down in words or traditionally understood, preserved, and acted upon. The larger, the older, the better organised a crowd may be, the more elaborate its constitution; but without a constitution of some kind not even a cricket club can long exist. I have known a dining-club without a constitution, but that merely meant that it did what its President decreed, and he was not really free to decree this or that according to his own whim, but preserved in his mind what he knew to be the habits and preferences of the members, even as

# The Crowd in Peace and War

the Common Law of England is said to reside in the bosom of a judge.

The degree of a crowd's organisation is not, however, only to be measured by the elaboration of its constitution, but even more by the power to control the action of individual units conceded to the executive by the general body. The Democratic theory of government in the United States is that the ultimate source and reservoir of power is and remains the individual citizen, who possesses all the rights that he has not parted with to the town-meeting. The town-meeting in its turn possesses all the rights that it has not parted with to the County, the County those it has not parted with to the State, and the State all the rights that it has not parted with to the Federal Body, which in its turn possesses those powers and rights only which it has thus constitutionally received. The European theory of government, on the contrary, is that all rights reside in the sovereign, and that subordinate assemblies and individual subjects possess only such rights as the Government has delegated to them by constitutional enactment or acknowledged tradition. In practice both theories work out to the same result, and the individual is under a like compulsion to do and abstain from doing a great number of acts. In process of time the organisation of so-called civilised national crowds has become very elaborate, more so in some states such as Germany, less in others such as England. In proportion to the completeness of the organisation is the power and efficiency of the collective body.

What is true of nations is true in a less degree and *mutatis mutandis* with all other crowds. The more elaborately

## Crowd-Organisation

and strongly they are organised, the more persistent are their ideals and the more efficient is their collective action. The Church of Rome is more efficiently organised than the Church of England, and is to that extent more powerful in its collective action. The one can restrain where the other cannot. The one is potent for good or evil where the other is impotent. Many of the Free Churches are less elaborately organised than is the Church of England and their efficiency for public action is thus feebler.

I once became cognisant of circumstances which manifested this difference of efficiency in a very remarkable manner. It was in an English city which was visited with a serious misfortune, whereby multitudes of the poorer classes were put to great hardship and distress. A large public fund was at once subscribed to meet the immediate need, and the administrators of the fund were faced with the problem of how the money should be distributed, and that immediately. It became at once apparent that the Church of England alone possessed in full working order the required organisation. It alone had a parish system with district visitors apportioned to every group of houses in the poorer parts of the town — officers, that is to say, already cognisant of the circumstances of practically every poor family in the afflicted area. They, and they only, could efficiently administer the relief, and to them the duty was assigned, with the unanimous consent of the representatives of all the denominations who had together co-operated to raise the fund. Of course all sects helped in the distribution, but the active distributing agency was and had to be the parish workers of the Church of England.

# The Crowd in Peace and War

The most powerfully organised crowds that exist are those formed by their executive under authority delegated to them by the whole body of a people. Such are the army, the navy, the police, and so forth. No efficient army elects its officers; it is the official class that selects the men. Here the organisation proceeds from above downward, not from below upward. It follows that here the organic relation of parts to the whole is complete. In theory no freedom whatever is left to the individual. Discipline is the name of the agency by which this organic unity is attained; and it is in fact discipline that makes the difference between a regiment and a mob. Drill is merely the agency by which discipline is inculcated, and that, not the shapely performance of manœuvres, is its true purpose. So long as a mob is filled with a common impulse it may act as a unit, but the moment the common impulse wavers the mob has no nerves or brain to bring it back into corporate integrity. Discipline is the means whereby nerves are given to a crowd, enabling it to be under the direction of a single brain. A disciplined crowd obeys and cannot help obeying its official leader and his official subordinates whoever they may be. An unorganised crowd only follows a hypnotising crowd-compeller or crowd-exponent.

Discipline inevitably begets rank. Only where organisation is low does equality actually, not merely theoretically, exist. The whole purpose of military organisation is to group units together under the direction of superiors of successive ranks, and thereby to substitute for mere blind crowd-instincts the directing brain of an individual. When two armies join in battle the object of each is not

## Crowd-Organisation

the mere slaughter of the other's units but the destruction of its organisation, which, if accomplished, turns the defeated body from an organised collectivity into a mob, it being universally true that a mob in the presence of a disciplined force is a thing impotent, terror-stricken, and incapable of resistance.

Whilst the units of an army are thus seen to be, in the main except under special circumstances, without initiative and altogether subordinate and obedient to their officers, no such complete abnegation of individuality is called for in turn from them. Every officer in relation to his superiors no wise differs from the men in respect of submission to orders and completeness of discipline; but an officer in relation to the men he commands can avail himself of all the powers of leadership, of crowd-compulsion, which he is capable of wielding. For over and above the discipline which makes men obey orders there is in an army, as much as in any other crowd, the capacity for that kind of high enthusiasm which enables individuals to act under its compelling influence, as without it they could never have acted. Real commanders of men are those who, whether they be subalterns or generals, are able to raise this heat of passion in their men and thus intensify their power individually and collectively many fold. It is for this reason that, as Kinglake observed, the harangues which seem to touch soldiers do not often embody a new and lofty conception, but utter some thought which comes within the reach of all. Thus by merging each man's emotion in the aggregate feeling of the regiment, the brigade, or the army, they make opinion set one way with all the volume and weight which can be given to it by a multitude

# The Crowd in Peace and War

of human souls when they bend their whole forces in one direction.

Where a crowd is to be organised to accomplish a fixed and definite result through the employment of physical force in the ultimate resort, there is no other type of organisation so efficient as the military. This is why the organisation of political parties approximates more and more closely to the military form in proportion as party-aims become definite and narrow, and the intention is to give effect to them even by force if possible. Thus the Irish Home Rule Party, which aimed at attaining one result, and that simple, definite, and by all its adherents well understood, before it had been long in existence came to approximate to the military form under the able direction of Mr. Parnell. In theory indeed the party elected its leaders, but in practice the leader selected all the officials of the party. In practice also the rank and file were under severe discipline and disobeyed the orders of their leaders at their own peril, even peril of life. No other such disciplined political party has in modern days existed in Great Britain, nor has any ever had the efficiency or maintained over so long a period the singleness of its aim. This was because Mr. Parnell was not merely a crowd-compeller of exceptional force, but because he likewise possessed in a high degree the genius for crowd-organisation, and so impressed his system upon the body of his supporters that, even when he himself lost control, the party he had shaped regained its equilibrium, like a disturbed gyroscope, and continued to revolve about the axis he had fixed for it.



## CHAPTER X

### GOVERNMENT AND THE CROWD

**I**N the preceding chapter it was necessary to encroach somewhat upon the subject with which we have now to deal, seeing that Government is an essential part of the organisation of a national crowd, and may be said to resemble the skeleton of the whole structure. It is obvious that man, the individual, will regard government differently from his twofold point of view: as a crowd-unit, and as an independent living creature. Similarly the governing body or sovereign may regard the governed from the same two points of view, as a public or as a multitude of individuals. We have had experience of legislation intended to promote directly the well-being of individuals, and of other legislation which regarded only classes. Finally the power which governments wield and by which they impose their will upon a people may be supplied by organised crowds or by the assent of a multitude of unorganised individuals. These general considerations will suffice to suggest what large questions are opened when we propose to discuss the interrelations of crowds and governing individuals or bodies.

Broadly speaking, the governments of the peoples of the world from the beginning till now may be divided into two classes: Kingdoms and Crowddoms. In the

# The Crowd in Peace and War

one individuals ruled; in the other public opinion. It matters not how the King be chosen or obtain his office, whether by birth, by murder, intrigue, or revolution, by any of the many forms called of right divine, or by election or selection. I shall call that man in every case a king who exercises his individual volition as a ruler over a crowd. Kingdoms and Crowddoms are both very ancient forms, and one is not necessarily older than the other; for, though throughout the ancient and mediæval worlds the headship of almost every state except a very few was held by an individual who looked like a king, it not infrequently happened that he was only the executive officer of public opinion and had little or no power of imposing his own individual will on the people he was supposed to rule.

Writers upon theories of government have sometimes taken the liberty of transporting themselves and their readers into unrecorded, prehistoric times, where by aid of imagination alone they have described how government arose, based upon "social contract" and other the like pictured foundations. Without attempting any such leap into the dark unknown past, it may be permissible to inquire what would be the needs of a number of independent individuals unlinked to one another by any laws or agreements but living within range of one another. Clearly they would be twofold: the need for co-operative protection and co-operative action. By uniting together they could provide protection for the persons and property of all, at far less inconvenience and labour than each household would have to suffer or employ to safeguard itself against all comers. By co-operation again

## Government and the Crowd

not only warlike attack but various forms of labour can be more efficiently accomplished and at less cost; and some works, such as irrigation, can only thus be accomplished at all. Both for common protection and for elementary forms of common enterprise the organisation required is of the type known as military, and a military organisation can be most easily and quickly accomplished and afterwards maintained, under the direction of a single head or king. But a crowd has already to possess a common feeling before it can thus be organised, and the common feeling makes it conscious of and interested in itself, as all crowds are and must be. Where public opinion exists and common emotions are felt, ideals take shape; and the body politic has a life of its own, a life longer, larger, and quite different in kind from the life of the individuals who collectively and successively compose it.

To travel down the long course of history sorting out Kingdoms and Crowddoms would be an interesting but a lengthy adventure. The reader will easily perceive for himself that in many an early patriarchal system of government the power of tribal opinion was very strong; that many a priest-king (of whom instructive and entertaining details may be read in Sir James Frazer's "Golden Bough") had little individual authority; and that, long before any definitely republican form of government had been devised, there existed many a little state in which the real source of authority was not the will of an individual but the desire of the crowd.

All this follows from the twofold nature of man, the gregarious and the non-gregarious attitudes which he

# The Crowd in Peace and War

assumes toward his fellows according as circumstances impel him. Where people live in close proximity to one another, as in a town, the gregarious element predominates and the crowd obtains control. Where people live in scattered homesteads, crowd-qualities lie dormant within them, and the individual is content in the main himself to look after his own interests. This is still true down to the present day. Thus Mr. Mundella, whose passion was the development of a democratic system of education under popular or crowd-control, made the following significant observation: "Whilst," he says, "it seems almost impossible to get the counties to levy a county rate for technical education, the municipal boroughs within the county are fairly willing to rate themselves for their own benefit, and the smaller urban townships have eagerly incurred heavy burdens when assured that they themselves would reap the profit of their expenditure. We have here, if we realise it, a measure of the areas within which local patriotism in educational matters is effective in a greater or less degree." This is really a priceless passage, every sentence and almost every phrase of which would afford subject for entertaining analysis, but we are now concerned only with the observation it records, to wit that it is in towns, where people are congregated, that the crowd-emotion is strong, and socialistic measures can be carried into effect with public assent; but in the country, where people live at some distance from one another, public opinion is weak and socialistic arrangements are unpopular. That is why recent socialistic legislation, all of which is begotten in towns and passed into law by town-represen-

## Government and the Crowd

tatives (speaking broadly), nowadays usually contains provisions enabling the central authority to impose on recalcitrant, mainly country authorities, though popularly elected, the necessity of carrying into effect and paying for a number of provisions which no country population would ever willingly adopt.

It follows therefore that, generally speaking, the intensity of the crowd-spirit is proportioned to the density of the population. Where economic or other conditions bring a great number of people together and cause them to live in close proximity to one another, there the individual tends to be merged into a crowd; there the crowd becomes conscious of its separate existence, its needs and desires other than those of the individuals composing it, and presently of its power to coerce the individual and make him labour and pay, not only for himself and his family, but also for the so-called common good. It was in the ancient city states that crowd-dominion first openly and plainly took shape. It was in them that the individual ruler — the wise man, the strong man, the typical king — was first openly tabooed and reduced from lordship to service. It was in them that the condition, quaintly misnamed Liberty, was first proclaimed — the Liberty for example by possession of which the Athenians slew Socrates! In the Middle Ages it was in the towns that this same Liberty again appeared, and power passed once more into the hands of other crowds and from those of various kinds of kings, the difference to the individual being that in the one case he had to obey the orders of some sort of public, in the other the orders of an individual ruler.

# The Crowd in Peace and War

Of course when the public rules, there is a probability that the individual citizen will be more or less of one mind with it, seeing that it is a crowd, possessing all the qualities that we have seen to belong to a crowd, one of which is the infective quality of the general opinion. Hence, as I have said, the individual citizen runs a good chance of being infected by whatever enthusiasm moves the crowd and therefore of desiring what the public desires; consequently he may be expected to find himself in agreement with the general tendency of legislation and administration when that is determined by public opinion. But an individual, strong and independent enough to escape crowd-dominance over his mind, and able to form his own opinions for himself, will probably be out of harmony with public opinion all or most of the time, and for him and all like him (the strongest and best class of folk anywhere and at any time) crowd-dominance will be not less but much more objectionable than the despotism of a king. For majority rule, that is to say crowd-rule, may be just as despotic as, and often has been more despotic than, the rule of a king has ever been. Moreover crowd-representatives openly claim the right so to domineer, as kings have seldom dared. Here is a plain statement by a democratic politician of modern type, the Hon. Stafford Bird of Tasmania. "He who was the "strongest, who could bring the greatest number of clubs "and spears in stalwart hands into the field; he who "could show the greatest fighting prowess, who could "best handle big battalions and big guns, obtained thereby "the right to rule. . . . *The gospel of democracy is that "those who can run the biggest crowd into the polling booth*

# Government and the Crowd

*"shall be the governors of the country."* The man who does not share the emotions of the majority and is out of harmony with public opinion needs protection from crowd-despotism even more than ever a subject needed protection from the power of a king.

Between Kingdoms and Crowddoms there exists the same hostility as between the really free individual and the thoroughly incorporated crowd-unit, and the like is true of regal despots and crowd-representatives. Despotic monarchs, and especially the wisest and ablest, are naturally out of sympathy with the aspirations of a crowd and are incredulous of the value and efficiency of crowd-government. If any man was "every inch a king," it was Bismarck, who really ruled his country with a power seldom surpassed. It would be easy to cite contemptuous and hostile opinions of his as to the merits of crowd-government. But in this he merely carried on the traditional and indeed necessary attitude of kingship toward crowd-domination, which never received a narrower and more emphatic expression than in the following two articles of the Treaty of Verona (22 Nov., 1822), wherein are authoritatively set forth the essential points of difference between individual and crowd rule: —

"ARTICLE I. The high contracting parties being convinced that the system of representative government is "as incompatible with monarchical principles as the "maxim of the sovereignty of the people is with divine "right, engage mutually, and in the most solemn manner, "to use all their efforts to put an end to the system of "representative government, in whatever country it may

# The Crowd in Peace and War

“exist in Europe, and to prevent its being introduced in those countries where it is not yet known.

“ARTICLE II. As it cannot be doubted that the liberty of the press is the most powerful means used by the pretended supporters of the rights of nations, to the detriment of those of princes, the high contracting parties promise reciprocally to adopt all proper measures to suppress it, not only in their own states, but also in the rest of Europe.”

It is rather strange that this document, which singles out the danger to kingdoms of a free press, makes no mention of the right of public meeting; for these are the two legs on which Crowddoms stand. By public meetings and popular journalism crowds are initiated and built up. Where public meetings are effectively prohibited and there is no free press, it is difficult, almost impossible under normal conditions, to form a free crowd even locally, and without a free popular press great national crowds or parties cannot be built up. Public meetings and a popular press are the two chief sources of crowd power and the two chief enemies of individual rule.

Government is representative when the members of its executive and legislative bodies are not merely elected by, but are amenable and responsible to, public opinion. When that is the case the crowd really rules. This, of course, implies that the members of the government are all of the type of crowd-exponents or crowd-representatives above discussed, except on the rare occasions when a crowd-compeller appears and for the time acts a kingly part. When a government, of whatever shape, produces a crowd-compeller for its head, it is not, so long as he is



## Government and the Crowd

in control, really representative; for public opinion then is what he makes it; it does not make him. The normal representative ruler or ruling class is made by crowd-opinion and carries out a crowd's behests. It follows that in undiluted representative government there is no place for reason, none for science, none for experience, none, in fact, for what we call "experts." Let me again cite the priceless Mundella. "There is talk," he says, "of the need of experts. Well, the proper place for the 'expert' is as the servant and not the master of the 'public.'" So that even an expert in governing is to be excluded from government, and the whole business is to be handed over to a body of representatives, mainly amateurs. Nothing could be more precise. The crowd is moved wholly by emotion, the expert by knowledge. In crowd-rule emotion is to give the law. Unless reason can, as how seldom it does, translate itself into an emotional form and obtain control of the passion of the crowd, reason is to be excluded and emotion is to decide. There is no escape from the conclusion that crowd-government, government by public opinion, government by the crowd for the crowd, must of necessity possess all the qualities which belong to the crowd and which we have discussed in preceding chapters. It must be intolerant, it must be despotic over the individual, it must aim at reducing all to the common form of crowd units, it must be passionate, variable, now keen in one direction, now in another. It was recorded in the "New York Nation" a few years ago, how, just before the passage of the Roosevelt Railway Bill, a Senatorial champion of it was privately declaiming on its inevitability. "I tell you, sir, that when the American

# The Crowd in Peace and War

"people rise in their might and demand a law of this kind, "there is no withstanding their will." "Well, Senator," asked a bystander, "what will it amount to after it is "passed?" "Nothing whatever," was the prompt reply; "the people will think no more of it, and will turn their "minds to the next agitation."

Mr. Keir Hardie, an apostle of crowd-rule pure and simple, once explained the conditions of its working. The order of proceedings was first to promote a great agitation for some measure and then to pass it while the hot fit was on. He said that if by means of delay, caused for example by a second chamber, the public had time to cool down, it frequently changed its mind, and thus you lost your measure. Whether the measure would work, whether the country would like it when it had got it, these considerations did not occur to him as worth notice. His idea was merely one of perpetual agitation, in which the crowd, kept at boiling point with enthusiasm for first this, then another, so-called reform, should maintain a set of representatives in well-paid office to pass laws in haste giving effect to these successive passions. Thus picturing the process of crowd legislation, he was by no means without understanding, for if legislation were ever to become a purely crowd business it is only thus that it could be carried on. The crowd cannot act except through passion. It does not desire to act at all until its passions are raised. That is most easily done by exciting its greed and directing its hostility against some smaller crowd or class, which is the favourite field of action of the demagogue. A crowd may likewise be inspired with enthusiasm for a high ideal. In an im-

## Government and the Crowd

perfect world its good and evil passions are usually mingled together. Only the individual can proceed by reason. Crowd-rule is passion enthroned.

We in England have seen examples enough in our own day of legislation by crowd-passion. Who that lived through it does not remember Mr. Stead's "Maiden tribute" agitation, and the accompanying behaviour of the House of Commons? The passion was not of an ignoble sort; but, as for the legislation it produced, little good did that accomplish. The same kind of phenomena accompanied the passage of the Old Age Pensions Bill. The House itself, being a crowd, is liable to all crowd diseases. On that occasion it was suddenly swept away by a wave of vaguely sympathetic enthusiasm, under the deluge of which it widened the scope of the measure and destroyed many of its sanest limitations. Those present stated that the House was carried away by a passion of generous emotion! Nothing could better indicate the nature of a crowd. Members were voting to give away other people's money and taking to themselves the joy and the credit of the giving. Those were moments of undiluted crowd-rule, but they were exceptional. Even to-day, with our new single-chamber government, Great Britain is not subjected to purely representative rulers. The crowd strongly influences but still does not wholly direct our legislation and administration, though its exponents are loudly clamouring for the removal of every restraint that impedes or prevents the entire liberty of the crowd to do and order what it pleases.

If pure Crowddoms are unsatisfactory and indeed in the long run impossible, what are we to say of Kingdoms,

# The Crowd in Peace and War

that is of governments not formally but actually directed by a personal king? It is generally admitted that when he is a truly great man, gifted with crowd-compelling power, endowed with wisdom and that kind of instinct and insight that make his choice of human instruments generally right, no form of government is better. What, however, in the long experience of the world has proved to be difficult, perhaps impossible of attainment, is the invention of a method for discovering and raising to the headship of a people the right kind of man for kingship. I say "perhaps impossible," for such is the generally received opinion; and yet the Church of Rome seems able nowadays to provide itself with a succession of excellent Popes to whom authority can be safely given, and it may be that what a church accomplishes could be accomplished also by a state. Bees breed their queens. The world has tried the hereditary principle in limited monarchy with tolerable success, but it has never called in the aid of science to direct the breeding of a truly royal race. Perhaps the future will solve the problem after the way of the bees. At present that method is outside practical politics; for, if the perils of crowddom are not nowadays clearly realised, every one knows the danger that a kingdom may develop, like the ancient Empire of Byzantium, into a splendid and selfish despotism, with an orientalized court, a decayed public spirit, and stifled individual initiative. The corresponding danger in the case of crowddom has yet to be learnt by modern experience.

For our present purposes, at all events, it suffices that kingship is not an admissible method of government in

## Government and the Crowd

the modern world. Only in Russia and America (in the so-called Republics of Central and South America) does it really exist; to some extent also in Germany. The Czar, however, may be less of a true king than he appears; as to the future of German Imperialism, who at this time of writing would venture to prophesy? South America is really the one continent where true monarchy still flourishes, the Presidents of the various States being as a rule personally supreme and not in fact representative. This tends to support the conclusion that kingship is only possible in politically backward regions, and especially those in which the population is scattered, communication difficult, the press weak, and the level of education low. Where ordinary modern conditions prevail the public is a more organised crowd, and demands, and is able to obtain, for better or worse, a position of supremacy or at least powerful influence in the government.

It has been the good fortune of Great Britain for a long series of years to have produced, and lived under, a constitution which was neither a kingdom nor a crowddom, but partook of the nature of both. The crowd obtained a great influence in the government, but various individuals altogether independent of and irresponsible to the public, likewise had a share of political power. It was this compromise and balance between the power of the crowd and the power of individuals independent of it which gave to Great Britain, during a century or more, an almost unique position in the world, and enabled the British Empire to grow to its present high estate, as under pure crowddom or pure kingdom it could not have grown.

# The Crowd in Peace and War

The United States also, by the wisdom of the framers of its constitution, provided an important sphere of influence in the government for potent individuals, who, though in form elected, were in actual fact not closely responsible to, nor under the immediate influence of the crowd. Such, for instance, were and still to some extent remain the Federal Senators, and it is to the Senate of the United States more than to any other branch of its government that continuity of policy, steadfastness to national tradition, and guarded resistance to sudden popular emotion have been judged due. On the occasion of the Spanish-American war indeed the safeguard failed, and the crowd, lashed to fury by a section of the irresponsible yellow press, rushed the country into war, when there was not a single point in dispute which the enemy had not officially expressed willingness to settle to the satisfaction of the United States by friendly negotiation. This is the kind of catastrophe sooner or later too likely to happen when the crowd dictates foreign policy. Corresponding ills accompany its unfettered actions in the areas of domestic policy.

Both in England and in the United States the crowd during recent years has, under the guidance of its exponents and representatives, put forward claims for a larger and indeed a supreme influence upon government, alike in legislation and administration. It has in many a recent enactment invaded the area properly belonging to courts-of-law and has substituted administrative for legal decisions in matters concerning the rights of individuals. Now claims are openly put forward for the complete dominance of the crowd in all parts of govern-

# Government and the Crowd

ment, and if the steps taken in that direction were to be pursued much further both Great Britain and the United States would become advanced Crowddoms.

If man were a purely gregarious animal this order of government might suit him well enough. But he is not; not even in cities. A human society in which every individual was as wholly enslaved to the crowd as is a bee to the hive would be an intolerable despotism. A bee all its life long is in unbroken slavery. Every act of its life is done for the hive. Its passion of work is used up in the interests of the community, and that not even mainly of the living community but of the unborn generation that is to follow its own. There is nothing in nature so horrible as the life in a hive of bees. Their industry is a veritable nightmare of self-abnegation, generation after generation, each for the next. That is exactly and without exaggeration the kind of life that every crowd tends to try to generate among its members and to impose upon them. To such slavery mankind will not long submit, for in the long run perhaps the most vital element in each individual is his ultimate and keen sense of his own separate individuality, and his desire to realise and express it. Moreover the higher a man stands in character, gifts, and acquired excellencies of knowledge and wisdom, among and above his fellows, so much the keener is his sense of differentiation from the crowd, and so much the stronger his desire to escape from crowd thralldom. As it is the ablest men that are thus the most individual and the most resentful of crowd-imposition, and as one able man can generally outwit a crowd, it follows that crowddoms pure and simple can never long main-

# The Crowd in Peace and War

tain themselves in power against the subtle assaults of individuals.

Hence in a stable government both the gregarious and the individualistic nature of the governed units must be regarded, and therefore both crowd-sentiment and independent human reason must find their spheres of action in the governing body, and each must be free from the control of the other. They must possess co-ordinate authority. Limited crowddom or limited monarchy alone can possess stability, because only they correspond to the twofold nature of man. It therefore follows that the purpose of government is as much to protect the individual from the tyranny of the crowd as to provide that the tendency and aim of both legislation and administration shall be in general harmony with the emotional direction of the public, not indeed at this or that moment, but over a reasonably extended period of time.

Nowadays there is no difficulty in providing a fit and clear means of expression for popular emotion. The whole system of elections, parties, and party organisations, has been organised to that end. It has been carried far, but perhaps not yet far enough. In former days (to confine our attention to Great Britain) the House of Commons did not even mainly consist of true representatives of the public. Its members were to a large degree independent of public opinion. Under such circumstances the House of Commons could be a deliberative assembly. Independent gentlemen, such as many members were in former days, under a loose party system, fall naturally into groups, and it was by negotiations between these groups that majorities were built up or destroyed. But



## Government and the Crowd

now the House tends to become purely representative of popular feeling, and every security that party discipline can invent is being taken to maintain the closest possible connexion between the emotions of the constituencies and those of the House of Commons, at all events toward the time of a General Election. As that recedes into the distance the constituencies may change their wishes and the House may and often does fail to change with them. In so far as that is the case it fails in the function which it is now supposed to fulfil. Every enlargement of the franchise and every shortening of the length of time between General Elections would tend to make the representative chamber more and more exactly what it is supposed to be. Universal male and female suffrage and annual general elections are logical developments of the widely current representative theory, nor, so long as the influence and power of the crowd is limited by a co-ordinate authority, is there any deadly objection to be taken to such reforms. Indeed, if public opinion is to be one of the main factors in government and legislation, it is obviously desirable that the body whose purpose it is to express that, should in fact express it immediately and clearly.

But exactly in proportion to the power of expression thus given to the popular will should be the power of restraint and direction provided for individual wisdom, experience, and foresight. The crowd possesses none of these qualities. It merely desires. It does not follow that its desires are attainable or attainable at once. Granted that the direction of legislation and administration must be in general harmony with the public will;

# The Crowd in Peace and War

the time, the form, and all the details of measures intended to give effect to that will, must be matter for rational discussion and decision; that is to say they must for those purposes be removed from the purview of the crowd and therefore of its representatives.

In the past this was accomplished by the aid of a second chamber, the members of which were not elected and were therefore independent of crowd-control. As crowd-exponent speakers were fond of asserting, members of the House of Lords represented only themselves. This was in fact the very *raison d'être* and merit of their existence. By the weakness and carelessness of successive administrations or successive generations the House of Lords was allowed to run to seed. No care was taken to purge it of the unfit, none to secure that, where heredity provided an entrance to the assembly, the marriages upon which heredity depended should be of a satisfactory character. The body of peers was allowed to grow too big and ultimately the House ceased to perform satisfactorily the business which was its function, and worst of all came to lose faith in itself.

When the concurrent authority of the House of Lords, side by side with the House of Commons, was done away with, it might be supposed that crowddom would have come. But, though a long step was taken towards it, there remained certain limitations to crowd-power which still have force. First there was the whole mass of existing statute law and the body of judges who administered it and who are not as a rule amenable to political pressure. The liberated crowd-chamber, as I have said, proceeded to undermine this, the main protection

## Government and the Crowd

which individuals possess against crowd-tyranny; but it will take a long time to socialise the law-courts, and before that has been accomplished reaction may be expected.

A more subtle barrier against complete crowd-control had also been built up almost unobserved, to wit the privacy of Cabinet deliberations. When, before the Reform Bills, the House of Commons was really a deliberative assembly, the Cabinet was a small and relatively weak executive Committee. But with the increased size of the nation, the growing complexity and multitudinousness of its life and activities, and the intrusion of popular control into every sphere, the organs of government multiplied. New offices were formed, new Ministries called into existence, and so the Cabinet increased in size. In fact that change took place which we have discussed in earlier chapters. The Cabinet grew to be itself a small crowd. From being a mere Committee it became an assembly, and what is more important a secret assembly. As long as it was only an executive committee the secrecy of its deliberations was normal; but when it became an assembly this same secrecy assumed a novel importance. For now, though a Minister when he appears in his place in Parliament is constrained to express opinions harmonious with those of his party all over the country, in the secret deliberations of the Cabinet he is under no such compulsion. It is thus not merely possible but certain that within the body of the Cabinet itself parties will form, and as the collective decisions of a Cabinet must be made to appear unanimous to the onlooking crowd, it becomes possible for one party

# The Crowd in Peace and War

within the Cabinet to dominate the rest, constraining all to follow its dictation.

It may be questioned whether in point of fact the Cabinet nowadays does not efficiently perform many of the functions of a second chamber, or at least whether it does not contain within itself the germs of a body destined under stress of circumstances to perform that function. Possibly it might be argued that the growing hostility which could be traced in recent decades between the Cabinet and the House of Lords — and that not alone in the case of Liberal Cabinets — was due to the jealousy bound to develop between two rival bodies, both endeavouring to perform, but interfering with one another in performing, overlapping functions.

We have heard much about the reformed Second Chamber which is some day to replace the House of Lords. There is one obvious intention with regard to it: it is not to be able to rival or overbear any Cabinet. Moreover it is to be made responsible to public opinion. It is to be crowd-ridden like the House of Commons. It is to consist of crowd-exponents and representatives subject to re-election by some kind of popular constituencies. Such a second chamber would of course be superfluous. It is the business of the House of Commons to express the public will, and no second body is required for that function. The only use for a second chamber is to express the mind and intelligence which resides in individuals but which is intrinsically absent from all crowds, constituencies, publics, or by whatever name they pass. To invent and set up a second crowd-chamber would be mere superfluity. But if one were to be created, the only result that

## Government and the Crowd

could follow is the same that would in any case follow if the present constitutional arrangements continued. The Cabinet would acquire the determining qualities proper to a second chamber. It would continue to grow in size and it would inevitably break up into groups. It would jealously protect the secrecy of its deliberations, and it might finally obtain, what it already grasps at, complete control alike over administration and legislation. The popular chamber beside it, tossed hither and thither by every wind and current of mutable public opinion, and incapable of performing deliberative functions, would steadily lose power, and the government of Great Britain would become a more or less elective oligarchy, strong enough to hold the popular chamber under its thumb.

We are thus led to the conclusion that the proper function of organised public opinion, that is to say the opinion of the national crowd, is to inspire but not to direct legislation. The public feels where the shoe pinches. If the body politic suffers from disease, it will know that it is suffering though it may seldom be able to diagnose its own ailment. The limits between emotion and reason are not hard to draw for practical purposes, and they define the areas within which the crowd and all its exponents and representatives can properly act and those wherein only individual intelligence can operate. But although, therefore, in any system of government which takes account of the actual and unchangeable facts of the nature of man, the impulse toward legislation will normally be given by the public and the form which legislation takes will be the work of men of individual ability, entirely independent of the crowd, there yet remains one further func-

# The Crowd in Peace and War

tion which the public may be organised to perform — to it may be allotted the ultimate decision as to acceptance or rejection of a completed measure. The three readings which a bill receives in each House of Parliament correspond to the three phases through which every proposed measure ought to pass. In the first stage the principle of the measure should be stated and accepted. This stage is in fact carried through by the public press, and nowadays no great popular measure ever comes before Parliament at all until it has passed this great and beneficent public first reading. With the second stage — the second reading and Committee — the public ought not really to be concerned at all. Here is the proper area of activity for experts, lawyers, and men of special intelligence. When the measure has taken form under the hands of these, what should hinder its direct submission to the public by what is called the Referendum, for final acceptance or rejection? Politicians, of course, do not like the Referendum, knowing as they do that most great measures now scrambled through Parliament would be rejected by the country. The famous Budget of 1911 was in fact thus rejected, though enough members who had been returned to vote against it were induced by negotiations, which need not now be discussed, to vote for and thus to carry it. The Irish Home Rule Bill would have been rejected, so would the Insurance Bill, and so possibly would the Bill for Welsh Disestablishment. Politicians of present-day type cannot therefore be expected to desire the introduction of the Referendum. "The office of the Senate," says Harrington, "is not to be commanders but counsellors "of the people." They can only fulfil that function if the

# Government and the Crowd

final voice, the ultimate Yea or Nay, be not theirs but the people's. Such was the ancient Roman theory of legislation expressed in the words "The Senate has resolved, the "people have decreed." In most modern states Parliament both resolves and decrees, whereas if Parliament really and truthfully reflects its constituent crowd it cannot properly "resolve," whilst if it does not so reflect it, then Parliament has no kind of right to "decree" — man being the twofold creature that throughout these pages we have postulated.

In some Swiss cantons the public has retained the right of final direct decision as to the passing or rejecting of legislative measures. This decision is generally given by aid of the ballot-box, but in some small cantons such as Appenzell the actual body of voters is brought together at one place and votes in person, as they may be seen doing in the interesting photograph here reproduced.<sup>1</sup> The unanimity which generally characterises a crowd physically assembled in one place, after it has had time to become conscious of itself, is clearly apparent even in this small photograph. The submission of measures for final approval to the whole body of voters in a country as large as the United States is a mere matter of machinery, quite possible to organise under modern conditions. Legislation thus achieved after full debate and final public vote would have a binding force beyond legislation passed by any representative assembly.

If it be contended that a representative body, resting on a wide enough franchise and renewed at sufficiently fre-

<sup>1</sup> I am indebted to the Swiss periodical "Heimatschatz" for permission to publish this photograph.

# The Crowd in Peace and War

quent intervals, should be in such close touch with the great public as to render any other direct appeal to the people superfluous, the answer is that under the existing party system, at any rate, this is evidently not the case; for, whereas the whole body of the people might be expected to accept some measures and reject others proceeding alike from a single party government, a body of representatives, responding to the party whip, as supposed agent of the public, would be sure to accept or reject all.

There is, of course, a quantity of minor legislation in which the great public is not interested and about which it could not be consulted. Here, for instance, is the record of the doings of the Legislature at Washington during the Congress that closed in March, 1915. 30,053 bills and joint resolutions were introduced: in the Senate 7,751 bills and 245 joint resolutions, an average of more than 83 for each Senator; in the House 21,616 bills and 441 joint resolutions, or an average of more than 50 for each Representative or delegate. 700 laws were enacted — only a little over 2 per cent of those introduced. 417 of these enactments were public laws, 283 were private measures. It is obvious that such a flood of legislation must pass through a representative conduit and cannot by any possibility be submitted by Referendum to the judgment of the whole people. For great measures of national reform, which affect the structure of the nation and are in fact constitutional innovations, a legislative chamber has no great value, except to register the will of the people and provide opportunity for expert individual minds to set forth that will in a form adapted to accomplish so much



# Government and the Crowd

of the national desires as under the circumstances of the day can be accomplished. But for minor and private bill legislation and to keep an eye on the national expenditure and the executive actions of government a representative body is obviously needed, and the business of that body is to reflect truthfully and immediately what is actually the public opinion of the moment. Such a body has nothing to do with individual opinion, nothing to do with reason. When brought together it ought itself to be a crowd, the exact image of the nation, only on a smaller scale. As a crowd it can never usefully deliberate. It can only inspire, accept, or reject, but its inspiration and its decisions may be concerned with matters too small in themselves and too numerous to be submitted to the whole public.

If the representative body is to reflect truthfully the emotion of the public — the great national crowd — it follows that each individual member should in turn represent a crowd also, that is to say should represent one of the separately existing crowds of which the nation is built up. Such crowds cannot be called into existence by a stroke of the pen. They exist because historical, economic, and industrial conditions have fashioned them. Cities are limited crowds; small towns are crowds; country districts that have been separate units for a long time are crowds. One cannot alter these facts. To cut the country up by a long-division sum into equal electoral areas is not to create so many new and separate crowds. I will cite as a single small example the adjoining cities, Rochester and Chatham. No motorist passing along the main street, continuous through both of them, could

# The Crowd in Peace and War

obtain by direct observation the vaguest idea where they divide. By every visible sign they are one city. In fact, however, they are two, with different historical pasts and wholly different municipal character. If you were to cut them into two equal electoral areas, giving a part of Chatham to Rochester, all you would accomplish would be the certainty of failing to get from either the true expression of local crowd-opinion. The same thing is true if, in order to enlarge the voting numbers of a town, you make the inhabitants of neighbouring country areas vote as of the town. In the result you get neither the opinion of the country nor that of the town. There is nothing in the nature of a mean or average to be arrived at between the two. The country crowd has one set of emotions, the town crowd another. You might as well seek the average taste of sugar and salt.

The foolish notion that anything is accomplished by dividing up a country into equal electoral areas, arose from the false idea that men go to the polling booth and vote each according to his own reasoned idea of his own individual interests; whereas they do nothing of the sort. Seeing that the people of any country must of necessity, at our present stage of evolution, be "mostly fools," what would be the value of their reasoned judgment about anything? "In 'Time and Tide,'" said Ruskin, "I 'have told my working-men friends frankly that their 'opinions, or voices, are 'not worth a rat's squeak,' " nor are the reasoned opinions of any save a very few. Voting, as we have already seen, is not an expression of individual reason but of crowd-emotion, and the foolish are as likely

## Government and the Crowd

as the wise, perhaps even more likely than the wise, to catch a fine crowd-ideal. Individual opinion has so small a share in voting as to be negligible; and it is as fortunate as it is inevitable that it should be so. We do not want an average of foolish opinions, but an integration of popular aspirations. "Le vote de chaque individu," writes George Sand, "n'est pas le vote (by which she means the "aspiration) de tous. La véritable adhésion des masses "n'existe qu'à la condition du contact des hommes réunis "en assemblée, s'éprouvant, s'interrogeant, se livrant les "uns aux autres, s'engageant par la publicité des débats "et pouvant échapper par là aux influences étroites de la "famille et aux suggestions passagères de l'intérêt personnel." The object of an electoral campaign is not merely to throw up a set of representatives, but to give singleness and clearness to the crowd's ideals, to make the various crowds realise and concentrate their aims, and in the fire and passion of the time to transmit their ideals to the representatives they cast up. Such singleness of purpose seldom abides long in any crowd, but the intention of crowd-organisation is to prolong it, and with it the vitality of the crowd itself.

The City of London is one crowd, the City of Edinburgh is one crowd, the county of Essex is a crowd; if you want the national crowd distilled, it is those and the like actually existing component crowds that must be represented, not overlapping sections of them. It follows that the old-fashioned representation by counties and boroughs was a more scientific way of reflecting public opinion in the House of Commons than is the present half-and-half system, and that that in turn is preferable

# The Crowd in Peace and War

to a system of constituencies each containing the same number of voters, cut out of the country at random without regard to its pattern.

It should be remembered that the emotional complexion of any given crowd depends little, if at all, upon its numbers. The civic character of London, New York, Philadelphia, Washington, and smaller cities like Bath or Londonderry, has always been a fairly constant quantity. They change little from one decade to another. Even when a city increases tenfold by steady infiltration of immigrants, its character may alter little. The newcomers, if they come as detached units, quickly receive the local tone and are made as effective agents in carrying on the local spirit as persons born and bred in the place. It is only when a great mass of incomers are of one sort, possessing a strong crowd-character of their own and preserving it by contact with one another, that a totally new spirit may be introduced. This is said to have happened to Boston when that old Puritan and characteristically New England city was submerged under a flood of Irish, in volume sufficient to revolutionise the local crowd-character.

Thus there is nothing gained by splitting up integral local crowds into sections which have no natural separate existence; on the contrary the representative character of their representatives is weakened. Should London then count for no more than Londonderry in the representative chamber? Of course not. Every one realises that the weight of a member in the counsels of the House of Commons is greater in some proportion relative to the importance of the constituency that returns him, and if the votes of members counted (as they do in some Labour

## Government and the Crowd

assemblies) in proportion to the size of the crowds that returned them, the desired result would be obtained, without the necessity for any redistribution bills or other gerrymandering arrangements.

It has been asserted that "a state is in essence a great "joint-stock company with unlimited liability on the "part of the shareholders." The analogy will not hold except in a time of war for national existence, and even then it is only the unlimited liability that all share. A state is essentially a vast crowd, a tremendous human organism, a Leviathan (to use the metaphor of Hobbes). A company on the other hand is not a crowd; it is merely a group of co-operating individuals, each desirous of his own profit and realising that that can only in the special case be obtained by co-operating with others. No one inquires as to the character of his fellow shareholders. You never see a successful company moved by emotion even when assembled in general meeting. The units are not united by emotion. It is only when something goes wrong and when a company does not effect its purpose that a common emotion of any sort arises in a company meeting. The purpose of a company is dividends. The purpose of a nation is the pursuit of ideals. Citizens have to make their living; it is little that any government can do to help them, though in much it can hinder. Every country pursues its ideals collectively rather than its business. That is what gives dignity to the great crowds. If it were not so, nations would only be great beasts of a pernicious character, and the first aim of civilisation would have to be to break them up.

## CHAPTER XI

### LIBERTY AND FREEDOM

THE best and latest of all dictionaries of the English language shows how the words I have written at the head of this chapter are vaguely used to carry all sorts of different and even incongruous meanings. Slaves longed for freedom, dissenting bodies claimed it, trades-unions demanded it, subordinate states have gone to war for it, but the freedom or liberty aspired to by these various classes is far from being one condition. For the purposes of the present chapter I propose to distinguish Liberty from Freedom and to employ each word in its separate meaning.

The ancient condition of freedom was the opposite to that of bondage or slavery; it was the condition of an individual who could decide the main circumstances of his life for himself. If he had to serve some master for his livelihood, he could at any rate select that master, and his service was given in exchange for something in the nature of wages. He was free to choose whom he would serve, free to starve if he pleased and serve no one, free to save and live at leisure on his savings, free to come and go at the bidding of no one. The word Freedom will here be confined to this kind of individual independence. No man indeed can be absolutely and unlimitedly free in this sense unless he lives, like Robinson

# Liberty and Freedom

Crusoe, alone upon an unpeopled island. Where people live within the range of one another the freedom of each must be limited by the freedom of others, so that the formula of individual freedom is this: that each individual is free to do and live as he pleases in so far as he does not interfere with the corresponding freedom of other individuals.

So speaking we regard the individual as an independent unit; the moment, however, he becomes a member of a crowd new limitations to his freedom occur. For every crowd limits and must limit the freedom of its members and not merely their freedom of action, but, what is far more serious, their freedom of thought. The crowd being a creature of emotions, and existing by the possession of a common emotion in its units, it is impossible for those units to escape this subordination of the soul. Thus all the citizens of a country are supposed to share alike the emotion of patriotism. A citizen who in time of war should assert that he was not patriotic would find himself in very unpleasant circumstances, if many of his fellow-citizens heard that utterance. A member of a church is supposed to hold the church's faith, and to suffer penalties if he does not. A liberal is held to accept the ideals of the Liberal party; a member of the Labour party is under the like or even a more severe compulsion; and so it is, more or less, with all the crowds to which men and women belong. Witness the dominion of fashion over so-called Society people; or the *esprit de corps* of the army; or "good form" in a public school. Evidently there is an opposition between the individual and the crowd in this matter of freedom, and he who would retain as much

# The Crowd in Peace and War

individual freedom as possible must be careful to limit within the smallest compass his adherence to crowds.

That a political organiser should desire to suppress the individual as a separate political unit is natural enough. My excellent friend Fitzgalahad Jones, for instance, finds himself at a given moment more nearly in agreement with, say, the Liberal party than with its rivals. He is, therefore, induced to join that party, and thenceforward must always vote for its nominees, not merely his own preferences. The day when he does not vote for those nominees he becomes a "traitor." Jones as an individual with a volition of his own is a nuisance to all the organisers who do not know what he will do, and have to spend money and trouble on trying to win his suffrage. If Jones can only once for all be dragooned into a party he need no further be bothered about. How easy would politics become if every one were once for all definitely a party member (as most voters are in the North of Ireland). Political leaders could then sell the vote of Jones if it pleased them. But look at the question from the point of view of Jones. The advantage of parting with his individual freedom of choice is not so obvious. Present-day Democracy rests on a few organised parties. What would a democracy be like if based on millions of independent Joneses each of whom decided to vote this way or that as he pleased? The dominion of the crowd would be at an end both for better and for worse. We shall not behold any such revolution in the world as we know it.

Thus we must conclude that the crowd by its very nature tends, and always must tend, to diminish (if possible to the vanishing point) the freedom of its members,



# Liberty and Freedom

and not in one or two respects alone, but in all. The crowd's desire is to swallow up the individuality of its members and to reduce them one and all to the condition of crowd-units, whose whole life is lived according to the crowd-pattern and is sacrificed and devoted to crowd-interests. Look at the Salvation Army, for instance, and observe how if it could it would make every one of its members "a good salvation soldier." The type is perfectly definite and the aim of the organisation is to make each individual approximate as closely as possible to that type. It is immaterial for our present purpose to note that the type in question is superior to that of the ordinary individual laid hold of, and that therefore the effect of such a change upon each would be a great improvement in his individual character. That is the claim of most crowds; they generally say and think that conformity to their standards is in the interest of the individual, and often the claim may be warranted. All, however, that we are here concerned to record is the fact of the limitations on individual freedom imposed by crowds on their members. Such limitations will be advantageous in the case of persons of low character, but often mischievous in the case of those of fine nature and high capacities.

An excellent illustration of this crowd-dominance crops up in my afternoon paper — the "Westminster Gazette," an organ permeated with the spirit of modern Crowddom. It appears that in certain parts of the country artisans, by drinking too much alcohol, are reducing their capacity of doing their proper work, which happens at the moment to be of great importance to the country at war. Many interferences with liberty are permitted in war time by

# The Crowd in Peace and War

general consent. It is accordingly proposed to put difficulties in the way of these drinkers by executive orders. One would suppose that the just way to do this would be to make a list of the drinkers and prohibit their indulgence. But this is not the way the crowd works. To it every one of its constituent members is like another and all must be drilled and controlled alike. As to the form this control should take, my paper says that "there is a "great variety of alternatives," of which it proceeds to give examples, but the crowd-voice comes out in its concluding sentence "whatever measure is adopted must fall "evenly on all classes, upon club, restaurant, and hotel as "upon the public house." Could anything be more absurd? Lest a gunmaker or a shipbuilder in Glasgow should drink too much, Mr. Asquith must not take a glass of sherry with his lunch at the Athenæum! That is characteristic of all crowds in respect of individual freedom, and it is that quality which in the long run produces an accumulation of individual hostilities to crowd-rule, and sooner or later ends by upsetting it.

We live in days when crowd-dominion over the individual has been advancing at a headlong pace. If things were to go much further in the same direction individual freedom would be dangerously restricted. A man, for instance, goes to Africa, or Borneo, or North or South America, and by hard work succeeds in making money enough to satisfy his needs for the rest of his days. He returns home and is perforce swept into the national crowd, which proceeds to take from him as much of his money as it pleases and to spend it in ways of which he may thoroughly disapprove. If he must not drink in

# Liberty and Freedom

London lest a Glasgow engineer should get drunk, why should not his eating be alike limited? Why not the style and cut of his clothes? Why not the size and character of his house? He must cause his children to be taught at least the minimum of muddled information which the government calls education. He must insure for his dependents the attention of an ill-educated physician and the administration of drugs known to be useless. If the crowd had its way every mother and every infant would be under the orders of inspectors, regardless of the capacity of the parent. We should all be ordered about in every relation of life from infancy to manhood, and in all our relations with children and servants. Freedom would utterly vanish, and this not because the crowd can arrange matters better than the individual. It cannot. It lacks the individual's brains. The ultimate reason for all this interference is the crowd's desire to swallow up and control the unit. The instinct of all crowds is to dominate, to capture and overwhelm the individual, to make him its slave, to absorb all his life for its service.

Hence individual freedom and the crowd are normally, necessarily, and for ever hostile to one another, and no true freedom is possible for the individual unless he can be protected against crowd-dominance. The crowd will not willingly protect him against itself. Such protection for him must be imposed on it, and this can only be done by limiting the crowd's right of free self-organisation, in other words it must be effected by the constitution of the crowd — by the national constitution in the case of a country. In the United States a written constitution and a powerful Supreme Court to interpret it do, to some

# The Crowd in Peace and War

considerable extent, effect the protection of the individual. The United States is in fact a limited Crowddom. In Great Britain there is no longer any such assured security. So long as a number of non-elected individuals possessed a co-ordinate share of legislative authority the individual was protected, if somewhat ineffectually after the House of Lords had been allowed to become a feeble and frightened body. But when the so-called veto of the House of Lords was abolished, even this protection was removed, and all that remained between the individual and the despotic crowd was the body of existing statute law and the judges with power to enforce it. There is nothing, however, to hinder the abolition of this security except the time necessary for passing other legislation, replacing by administrative orders the decision of courts of law in all cases where the interests of individuals clash with the interests of the crowd. Mr. Winston Churchill stated the crowd's claim in naked simplicity when he said, "Whenever private privilege comes into collision with the public interest the public interest must have right of way." Thus if I am the owner of a rare and beautiful picture, that is obviously a case of private privilege; as obviously it is to the public interest that they should be able to see it. I am therefore to be compelled to show it to them! I would sooner burn it than suffer such compulsion. What is mine I will show if, when, and to whom I please. An individual's private rights are always liable to interfere with some public interest, but all the pleasure of life consists in the possession and jealous maintenance of such rights. If a man does not wish to fight for his country is it right to compel him to do so?

# Liberty and Freedom

Suppose he knows himself to be a constitutional coward. One of the finest musical artists in the world told me that he was a hopeless coward and that nothing on earth could make him face even the noise of the firing of a gun, to say nothing of his dread of a bullet. Why should he be compelled to fight for his country? He did not make himself or select his own nerves and character! This is an extreme case. In time of war the relation of the citizen to his nation is changed, as we shall see, but in times of peace the limitation of public despotism over the individual is necessary in the ordinary affairs of life. The only question is where to draw the line. Witness the silly interference with individuals in the supposed public interest brought about by Building Acts in towns. Innumerable instances of their folly could be cited. The same is true of Education Acts, Insurance Acts, and all other the like interferences with individual freedom, except when that freedom limits the corresponding freedom of other individuals. No doubt there will always be room for difference of opinion as to the interpretation of this proviso; but the crowd in its desire for dominion is not concerned about any such question. It desires to control the whole life of each of its units and cannot help so desiring. That is the nature of the beast, and it is precisely because that is its nature that it needs to have its powers limited. The despotism of kings has been tried and the experience of mankind showed that unless a king's powers were limited the individual was bound to suffer. Now the despotism of crowds is on trial and a similar experience is arising in relation to them.

There exist in fact two separate and alike inalienable

# The Crowd in Peace and War

rights, that is to say inalienable without damage to both men and mankind; these are the rights of man and the rights of the people. They are separate and indeed opposed rights. The rights of man are to individual freedom, protection from violence, his own property, and constitutional guarantees. The rights of the people are to the limited sovereignty of public opinion. The contest between these two rights was the central feature of nineteenth-century politics and the tendency has been towards victory for the rights of the people, or in the words of M. Émile Faguet, “la diminution progressive et la suppression pour finir de toute liberté, de toute sûreté individuelle, de toute propriété, de toute garantie constitutionnelle, de toute résistance à l’oppression.” Notwithstanding this modern tendency it none the less remains and always must remain true that, to continue the quotation, “L’individu a droit à l’existence et par suite au libre développement de sa personnalité sous le régime de la Souveraineté Nationale aussi bien que sous celui du Droit divin. Ce doit même être le but essentiel de la nation en tant que Peuple Souverain d’assurer cette existence et ce libre développement. Il est donc à la fois nécessaire et légitime de protéger l’individu, s’il y a lieu, contre le despotisme du Peuple aussi bien que contre celui des rois absolus.”

Mazzini saw, and as far as he saw, sympathised with what was coming, as is shown by the following passage from his Essay on Carlyle: “That which rules the period which is now commencing, in all its manifestations; that which makes every one at the present day complain, and seek good as well as bad remedies — that which every-

# Liberty and Freedom

“where tends to substitute, in politics, democracy for  
“governments founded upon privilege — in social econ-  
“omy, association for unlimited competition — in reli-  
“gion, the spirit of universal tradition for the solitary  
“inspiration of the conscience — is the work of an idea  
“which not only alters the aim but changes the starting  
“point of human activity; it is the *collective* thought  
“seeking to supplant the individual thought in the social  
“organism; the spirit of *Humanity visibly* substituting  
“itself (for it has been always silently and unperceived at  
“work) for the spirit of men.”

It all sounds very plausible, very hopeful. A fallacy, however, lies hidden in the phrase “collective thought.” There is no such thing as collective thought. Thought resides only in the individual brain. Individual thought inspired by collective emotion, that is the only prolific power. That alone leads mankind upward along a solid track. Collective emotion uncontrolled by individual thought is merely explosive. Whatever it casts upward presently falls back to the ground again and none the better for its excursion into the inane.

Having thus briefly considered the condition of Freedom and the relation of a free individual to the crowd, we have now to ask wherein what is popularly called Liberty consists, and how far Liberty and Freedom are capable of existing simultaneously in the same society. Now whatever condition the word Liberty implies it must be of a kind consistent with the revolutionary watchwords — “Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity!” Liberty, therefore, must be a condition consistent with a simultaneous state of equality amongst men. But individual freedom

# The Crowd in Peace and War

and equality cannot exist together, for, if all individuals are free, the abler and more gifted will impose their directive authority upon the less able, and heredity will stereotype the consequent inequality generation after generation. Equality can only be attained and maintained by the collective despotism of the less able multitude over the more able few, and liberty must be a condition consistent with such a despotism. Liberty, therefore, is not the same as individual freedom, but the antithesis to it. Liberty is not freedom to the individual from the dominion of other individuals or from the dominion of crowds. Liberty is freedom for crowds to dominate individuals, freedom for crowds from impediments to their expansion, organisation, and self-realisation. It is not the individual but the crowd that calls for Liberty; it is not in the interest of individual development but in that of crowd-authority that the goddess of Liberty is invoked.

Liberty, then, is a political condition, a function of constitutions and national organisation. As Hobbes stated: "The liberty, whereof there is so frequent and honorable mention in the histories and philosophy of the ancient Greeks and Romans and the writings and discourses of those that from them have received all their learning in the politics, is not the liberty of particular men, but the liberty of the commonwealth." This is not alone true of nations, it is true also of lesser crowds. Thus Bismarck said of the Church of Rome that its clergy in any country "constitute a political institution under clerical forms, and transmit to their collaborators their own conviction that for them liberty lies in dominion,



# Liberty and Freedom

“and that the Church, whenever she does not rule, is justified in complaining of Diocletian-like persecution.” This demand of the church for liberty is the demand also of all political parties and of every association, which aims at accomplishing an organisation of the national crowd, or any part of it, in order to give effect to some political or social ideal. Labour demanded liberty to organise its crowd, liberty to impose the will of the majority on the minority, liberty to extinguish the individual freedom of its members. That is what the political demand for liberty always means: liberty for some crowd to enslave certain free individuals.

Liberty in this sense implies the possession of three principal rights: the right of assembly and unrestrained speech, the right to print and publish without restriction, and the right of crowd-formation and organisation. The first of these rights is generally called the right of free speech, but that is a misnomer. No crowd tolerates freedom of speech. Imagine the kind of hearing a Tory would receive from a confessedly Liberal audience if he were openly to speak his mind. Nor is the crowd less intolerant of free speech in the ordinary circumstances of life. Who would be wise to utter unpatriotic sentiments in a full railway compartment during the present time of war? Where the crowd is ruling, a man may not openly say the thing he pleases if it be in opposition to public opinion. It is proof of crowd-rule if a man of ordinary prudence finds it inadvisable openly to oppose public prejudice. Nations close the mouths of individuals in the name of patriotism. Society closes them in the name of good form. Churches close them in the name of

# The Crowd in Peace and War

orthodoxy. No! what the public means by freedom of speech is certainly not freedom for each individual to express his own personal opinion. So-called freedom of speech is no part of personal freedom; it is only a factor in crowd-liberty.

Freedom of speech, freedom of public meeting, a free press: all these things are parts of liberty. They imply the liberty of the crowd from the control of independent individuals or from limitation of power by constitutional restrictions. It is by public meetings, public speaking, and the press that crowds are formed, developed, and organised. Where these are prevented or regulated crowd-formation is difficult. Where these are controlled and directed by a central authority, a definite direction may be imposed on public opinion, which under free institutions might have adopted a contrary attitude. The German Government, by controlling and directing almost all organs of publicity, succeeded in creating a national opinion of singular force and unanimity in sympathy with the wishes and aims of the government itself.

In order to form and build up an opposition to the powers that be, liberty of propaganda is almost essential. It can only be dispensed with when a vast number of individuals are so eager to work against a government as to be able to create a national movement by multitudinous personal activity. Such a movement was thus created in Italy against the Austrian government before the day of Italian unity. Under normal political conditions freedom of public utterance is essential for the formation of a new public opinion, that is to say of a new political crowd.

# Liberty and Freedom

The impulse being thus given, liberty to organise the new body is a further necessity. Existing parties view with disfavour the formation of new parties. No one can be sure to what a new party may not grow. The right to organise has therefore been a right that has had to be fought for. Witness the great and bitter struggles by which liberty of religious organisation was won. How the Roman Church resisted the formation of Protestant bodies, and how those in different countries endeavoured to stifle non-conforming bodies! Such resistances to the formation of new crowds result from the normal crowd-instinct of self-preservation, for only by a new crowd can an existing crowd be rivalled, supplanted, or destroyed. Hence the demand on the part of all who would form crowds for liberty to do so if they can.

This liberty of theirs does not suffice them unless it includes a power to control and dragoon the individual member. We have all beheld the organised body of Labour fight for and obtain this liberty, this right to enslave the individual workman by miscalled peaceful persuasion! It is the open and avowed object of the trades-unions to compel all workmen to come within their body and to exercise over every individual member a complete despotism, not in order to further his particular interest but only that of the collective body. The facts in this case are so obvious that it would be waste of space to illustrate them by many examples; one will suffice.

It is obviously the interest of the better and more intelligent workman to be paid more highly in proportion to his superior skill and ability. The employer is prevented from thus differentiating. It is to the interest of

# The Crowd in Peace and War

a quick worker to be able to earn more in a day than a slow one. Trades-unions set their faces against his doing so. If one man can manage several machines, it is to his interest to do so, and be paid accordingly. He is forbidden to manage more than one, so that employment may be provided for a larger number. In these and countless other ways an organised and despotic crowd sets the interests or fancied interests of the many before those of the individual, and it is always the superior individual whom the crowd sacrifices, and always the inferior whom it fosters. For to all crowds all its units are alike. If some are not to drink, all must not drink. If some want holidays, all must take holidays. If some are to be slow workers, all must be slow workers. All must be depressed to the level which all can reach, inevitably a low level.

Liberty so to organise crowds is what the crowd calls Liberty. It is the very reverse of Freedom. The men who call aloud for this liberty and are never tired of praising it are the crowd-representatives. They are the people on whom restraint falls, where liberty of association is limited, and they, instinct with all the passions, prejudices, ambitions, and limitations of the crowd they incorporate, resent, as all crowds and crowd-men must, any interference with their action as corporate exponents.

Obviously, then, if individual freedom is to be preserved crowd-liberty must be limited. Just as in national governments unlimited Crowddom is as wretched a state as unlimited monarchy, so in the smaller crowds that exist within a nation a similar limitation of power is essential if freedom is to be maintained. Here therefore once

## Liberty and Freedom

more we are driven to the conclusion that for a healthy community neither complete individual freedom nor complete crowd-liberty should be allowed. It is as useless as it is foolish at this time of the world's history to rage against the organisation of crowds and attempt to prevent their easy formation. It is their power of organisation and control over the units that compose them which needs to be limited, that thereby individual initiative, individual thought, individual self-realisation be not impeded. In a sound society the preservation of individual freedom is as important as the preservation of public liberty, and these being hostile the one to the other, it is a main function of the central authority to preserve an equilibrium between them in every rank, occupation, and class.

## CHAPTER XII

### EDUCATION

REFERENCE has been made above to the educational value of their own public opinion upon the scholars in a school, but the matter is too important to be thus lightly passed over, whilst the relation of the crowd to education has many other aspects and produces various important results. It might be supposed that, if the individual's interests in any area of life are to be provided for, apart from consideration of the interests of the crowd, it should be in respect of education; for here surely is not the sphere for block treatment. The gifts of each child are different from those of the rest. Each has his own possibilities, his own difficulties, and for each some special future is more to be chosen and prepared for than any other. Moreover, a given child cannot be equally well taught by any of the class labelled "teachers." Some can learn from one, some from another; and the best ultimate output is arrived at by the combination of mutually adapted pupil and teacher. Of course, where education is a matter of government ordering, and a universal routine is applied to all alike, the ideal of individual treatment for the purpose of attaining the best individual development is not even aimed at. Under no circumstances could that ideal be fully realised, but a system that does not and cannot

# Education

even contemplate it as to be aimed at, must be false in the very nature of things.

Our modern public educational system does, however, make one exception in the uniformity of its treatment. That exception is not, as an observer from another planet might have supposed it could be, to devote special attention to the more gifted children so as to make the most of unusual abilities. It is on the contrary an exceptional treatment for the half-witted, upon whom is lavished a care and attention which they of all children least deserve and can least profit by. Here we trace the dominance of the sentimentality of the crowd, not of the wisdom of the wise. For the crowd, which would regard all units as alike, resents the intellectual inequalities which nature decrees at birth, fearing in each superior individual a restive crowd-unit, but it has no corresponding dread of the half-witted and can satisfy its sentimentality by according them exceptional advantages without danger to itself.

The crowd, looking to its own continued existence throughout a far longer period than the span of human life, regards education as the process whereby the new generation is to be made in its own likeness and to continue its own immediate aspirations. The Church desires to fashion the young into future Churchmen, the Nonconformists into future Nonconformists, Socialists into Socialists, squires into squires, liberals into liberals, tories into tories, and the whole nation acclaims the wisdom of bending all efforts to fashion each and all into what are called "good citizens." Hence the struggle on the part of various crowds to retain the right of polarising the

## The Crowd in Peace and War

education of those children on whom they can respectively lay hands. The parson wants to have them taught the catechism and so forth, the Roman churchman to see that they are well grounded in Catholic dogma, the Non-conformist that they are not taught these things but another set, the Socialists would have their young lips early framed to sing, "There is no god." All alike are earnest in their effort, because they believe with pathetic unanimity that if you train up a child in the way you wish him to go he will remain in that way after your compulsion is removed, and this though experience shows the exact contrary to be often the case. Thus the introduction of undenominational school-board education was presently followed by a remarkable revival in the vitality of the Church of England, as the generation thus educated grew up.

So long as this superstition exists, so long will various crowds clamour for liberty to preside over the education of their children—a liberty, like that other we have just been considering, not for the person educated or his parents to choose what he shall be taught, but for the educator to impose on him a determined and perhaps hated teaching. In these matters it is not by the teacher but by the public opinion of the taught that an individual child is influenced, and no amount of mere instruction will in any way alter or negative the power of that opinion. It is only a gifted teacher who can rise above the ordinary level of instruction and compulsion, and can create a desired new public opinion among his charges, that can really affect their character and stamp a lasting impress upon it.



## Education

A remarkable instance of what can thus be accomplished is given in the Blue Book entitled "Annual Report for 1913" of the chief medical officer of the Board of Education," (p. 237), wherein is related how the children of the Hughes Fields Girls' Council School at Greenwich were taught the rudiments of cleanliness and decent living. "This school is situated in an extremely poor part of Deptford. "Indeed, the condition of the children attending the school was at one time so trying to those who came in contact with them, that the staff were constantly absent through illness, it became impossible to keep supply teachers more than a few days, and the attendance was frequently as low as 60-70 per cent for the whole year." Accordingly, nine years ago a new régime was introduced, consisting of lessons in hygiene, inspections, and doing things. The lessons may be imagined. They were only given to the older children. The inspections were daily; boots, clothes, hair, hands, nails, handkerchiefs, the basins and towels with which they had washed, all were looked at, and the dirty and untidy were shamed by being put right in the presence of the class. This was the real educational force. A new public opinion was created, and it was fostered by such exercises as tooth-brush drill, nail-trimming drill, and so forth. The children were also asked at what hour they went to bed the previous night, and whether they had slept with an open window. The master of another large school invokes the aid of public opinion in the same direction by having a prepared blackboard in each class room with spaces for the insertion of figures detailing the number present with clean boots, collars, nails, teeth, handkerchiefs, and

# The Crowd in Peace and War

"open windows last night." The result of this effort after nine years on the Deptford school is thus described.

"The attendance now averages over 92 per cent, the members of the staff are no longer frequently absent on sick leave, or desirous of obtaining new posts; the children now bear the closest inspection, and are able to progress normally in the ordinary subjects. Taking the school as a whole, the effect of these methods can be best seen by passing from the lowest class to the highest, thus starting with dirty teeth, bitten nails, unkempt hair, and untidy clothes, we reach clean teeth, properly tended hands and hair, and neatly mended clothes. The happy air and healthy looks of the children make it hard to believe that this is actually a school of 'peculiar difficulty.' The children obviously love the school, and from being a place avoided by teachers it has become a field of happy and useful work." Such are the results brought about by a healthy public opinion. "In many schools the children who systematically attend school with clean boots, clean collars, hair tidily done, teeth brushed, and who sleep with their windows open, are named 'specials,' and there is a great rivalry amongst them to be so classed."

Hardly could one cite a better illustration of Ruskin's contention that "Education does not mean teaching people to know what they do not know—it means teaching them to behave as they do not behave." If that were all that education means it would be entirely a matter for crowd-influence and not for instruction in the ordinary meaning of the word. A child, who passes through such a school as this, is likely to receive a per-

# Education

manent impression from it, to have its image in some degree stamped on his own individual character, to have his opinions in some degree fixed by it for life. As Dr. Johnson said, "Opinions once received are seldom "recalled to examination; having been once supposed to "be right they are never discovered to be erroneous." This is as true of false opinions as of sound ones.

The case above cited is an example of the proper use of crowd-emotion for the improvement of the individual. Seeing that crowds are the home of emotions, it follows that from them, by infection and influence, by the absorption of their atmosphere, the emotions of the individual are mainly to be aroused or even created. If you could bring an individual into contact with successive crowds, all animated by noble ideals of different kinds, the chances are that he would catch those ideals one after another and himself become impregnated by them, just as from an evilly minded public he would with difficulty avoid catching low and base ideals. The use of crowdship in education, therefore, is obvious; it is to ennoble the unit. Instruction cannot do this; instruction tends to defeat its own object if it deserts its proper domain of transferring facts and developing skill. The whole power of education in respect of character lies in the school's public opinion, and he who can influence the growth in that of high ideals and just principles, he is the moral educator of the young, and no other can take his place. It is, as I have said above, because our English Public Schools and Universities have developed this kind of moral force, that they have been so efficient in the formation of our national character. They may not be the best agencies

# The Crowd in Peace and War

in the world for teaching facts; German schools claim to turn out better equipped intelligences per hour of teaching; but as agencies for the formation of character the English Public School and the old universities may claim pre-eminence in the world.

The national crowd, then, if wisely directed, will demand of a national system of education, whose main business is to produce good citizens, that chief attention be given, not to what is taught, but to what is caught, not to the amount learnt by a child but to the tone acquired. All of us learn the facts and acquire the skill we need for life mainly from life itself. Teachers can impose on us but a slender equipment. Most of us learn by study not by teaching, or only by teaching as a result of study. He that desires to learn can be easily taught if you give him the opportunity. But to establish that desire in an individual — that is the difficulty, for it cannot be established by inculcation but only by infection. In countries where the mass of the people have an emotional belief, a crowd-faith in education, there alone does this desire commonly arise in the young. In Scotland, in Germany, — I know not where else, — there exists an emotional faith in education, and the young work hard and willingly. In England such faith does not exist, and young workers accordingly find the life of a “smug” far from easy. He that can teach the nation a new faith in work will accomplish for England the great revolution of which it stands in need; but if our schools were caused to lose their present high moral tone in exchange for a more efficient system of instruction, and if our public school boys were to forsake the ideals of good form they now so keenly

## Education

maintain and take up instead a cold ambition for intellectual success, the change would be disastrous and England would presently lose her high place amongst the nations. "I will do it," promises the South American. "On the word of an Englishman?" inquires his friend. "Yes! on the word of an Englishman." That is the finest tribute to our country that the world affords. The public opinion of our public schools is the medium in which that honest English spirit is most efficiently cultivated.

Curiously enough, their very efficiency as character-forming bodies is the reason why our ancient and incomparable Universities of Oxford and Cambridge are of relatively little use to foreign students, not even to our kindred American students. In the past they have gone chiefly to German universities, the reason being that they were seeking to acquire knowledge and skill, which could there be acquired, in some branches of learning at any rate, more readily than here. After all, the main business of Oxford and Cambridge has been to turn out straight-dealing, clean-living Englishmen, and only in a secondary degree to manufacture scholars. They have served our national purpose superlatively well. It is not impossible that they might equally well turn out citizens of the world. That, however, is a matter for the world to discover, not for us to aim at. Moreover the spirit of our Universities was not produced by taking thought; it was evolved in long process of time. If ever a world-university is to arise, impregnated with a high international or super-national human tone, that also will have to grow, and who shall say where it is likely to take root?

If, as Macaulay said, the first business of a state is the

# The Crowd in Peace and War

education of its citizens, the very word employed indicates that the matter to be attended to is the development in them of the character of citizenship. By one of those strange contrarieties of which modern systems of government and legislation afford so many examples, it is exactly this side of the educational problem to which the legislature in its large lack of wisdom appears to give no thought. What subjects pupils shall be taught, what hours they shall attend, till what age they shall be kept at school, such are the matters in relation to the young that an Education Office is called to determine. These are all questions that should be determined by individual teachers, by parents, or perhaps small local divisions, and they should of necessity vary widely from time to time and from place to place. The one universal need, the same everywhere, is the formation of character, and that is supposed to be attained by what is called Religious Education.

From the point of view of the nation the promotion of a high moral tone among the scholars in every primary school is the first object to be aimed at. If Religious Education is the chosen means to this end it must be something altogether different from mere instruction, and it must not be left to chance, or divided among a lot of conflicting sects, or confined to a definite set of hours, or least of all abandoned altogether. The Labour Party are in favour of having no religious education at all, such is their misunderstanding of their own socialistic principles. If Socialism is to be a reality, it must be based on the moral education of every member of the community, for until all our hearts are changed, the socialistic ideal

# Education

is impossible of attainment. The socialist Sunday schools accomplish nothing by making their children sing "There is no god," beyond the probability that in after life those very individuals, reacting against a teaching imposed on them, will be more liable than others to become highly superstitious and credulous. Not socialists only or mainly, but all persons, who have the future welfare of their country at heart, are called upon to devise some universal method for stimulating throughout all the primary schools the same kind of fine ideal of conduct which has made our public schools and old universities so great a blessing to Great Britain.

As for the teaching of facts and the development of skill in the individual pupil, that must always be and remain an individual's business. No general laws can govern it, no central administrative body can help it, no code can define it. It must be as variable as are the individual teachers and the individuals taught. Each pupil is a separate problem. Each teacher must solve each such problem for himself in his own way. There is no other possibility; all that the interference of a central authority can accomplish, if it insists on meddling in these matters, is to impede where it fussily proposes to direct and help.

One powerful impetus and one only can the national crowd give to education, in the sense of learning facts and acquiring skill: it is to supply the infective passion for learning. But it can only supply a passion which itself experiences. For no crowd can generate a new emotion from the depths of its own multiplicity; a new emotion must be kindled within it, as of old, by a prophet. What

## The Crowd in Peace and War

England needs is a prophet of learning, and surely now is the time for him to appear: now when the great object lesson of German efficiency looms so large within the vision of us all. The same great light which manifests the inestimable value to us of fine national character, fashioned within our people by the successive ideals laboured for and proclaimed by the generations that have gone before, manifests also a lack among us of personal efficiency in those things which have to be learned by study; so that, while we may indeed thank our forefathers that they have not imposed upon us the overburdening weight of a vile ideal of mere brute force, we ought likewise to perceive that ours is now the duty to make good what is lacking, and to determine that in the future we will labour to implant in our nation a new faith, a new aspiration toward a larger learning, a fuller intellectual life, and a wider diffusion of every sort of skill. "There is nothing in any state so terrible," said Sir Walter Raleigh, "as a powerful and authorised ignorance." Let us see to it that at long last ignorance shall be nationally realised to be among the greatest of national perils.



## CHAPTER XIII

### MORALS

**R**OBINSON CRUSOE, when alone on his island, was relieved from all the problems that arise among members of a community. He could harm no fellow-man by any action, but he could still harm himself and behave brutally to the animal world about him. I once saw a Dago sailor plucking a little live bird to pieces, limb from limb. The hideousness of that act did not depend on the social relations of the evil-doer. It was a sin against his own humanity. It was vile because he was a man, a being highly enough developed to be able to enter into relations with the exterior world of nature and animals on a higher plane than that of mere destructive brutality. A hawk tears a dicky-bird to pieces without becoming thereby an immoral hawk, or descending in the hawkly scale, but the man who so acts descends in the human scale and thus injures himself and is immoral.

There is therefore a morality which applies solely to the individual as a separate unit, as it were in a crowd-vacuum. I will not pause to inquire whether that morality could have been developed in such a vacuum, because for our present purpose it is sufficient to indicate the existence of individual morality in a man's relations to himself and to nature. Clearly Robinson Crusoe could

# The Crowd in Peace and War

have overeaten himself, or he could have brewed intoxicants and become a drunkard, or he could have indulged in other private vices, and all of them might have been called immoral because all were acts by which he injured himself. Similarly by idleness he might have lowered his vitality, by sloth he might have dulled his powers of observation and action. In these and many other ways he might have sinned against himself. Any action harmful to the health either of his body or his mind would have been rightly describable as an immoral action, and if he realised it to be so there would have risen within him an impulse not to do that action. This impulse, this prick of conscience, would have resulted from the mere instinct of self-preservation which every healthy-minded individual possesses, and which operates apart from any relation to his social surroundings. It is an instinct completely individualistic alike in origin and in its purpose.

I shall apply the term Individual Morality to a man's obedience to such laws as his instinct for self-preservation and impulse toward self-development unite to impose upon him. Individual morality heeds the adjustment of the individual to the external world of nature. Its laws are primarily those of hygiene, physical and spiritual. Science determines them, so far as the individual has knowledge; will enforces them.

Individual morality, enforced by the will and stimulated by individual conscience, does not carry us very far. More important are a man's relations to the persons with whom he comes in contact, his conduct toward each of them and theirs toward him. We may apply the term Mutual Morality to the principles ensuing from the con-

## Morals

duct of such mutual relations between individuals as those of husband and wife, those of parents and children, brothers and sisters, those of friends, and of men in business relations to one another—master and servant, buyer and seller, landlord and tenant, and so forth. All these are individual relations over which the crowd only by usurpation obtains any control, unless individuals voluntarily call for its sanctions or interference. Thus individuals may invoke the crowd to take cognisance of an agreement, and the crowd may permit its representatives to do so and may define the terms on which they may do so. Two men may make a verbal bargain and trust one another's honour, or they may make a legal bargain which crowd-representatives will enforce. That is the individual's option. The admission of the crowd as party to a bargain between individuals is, however, a great danger, because the crowd is certain sooner or later to impose on them consideration for its own supposed interests, under which before long theirs may be overwhelmed. Marriage is an obvious case in point which we shall presently consider.

I have used above the word honour, for brevity, as indicating the kind of power by which individuals may be governed in their mutual relations; but that already assumes the existence of crowd-morals enforced by public opinion. Honour is what the crowd of his own kind renders to a man who, in his relations with other individuals, acts up to their standard. This is not mutual morality but a kind of crowd-morality, though applied to individuals, and it is a dangerous force. Honour even to-day in some countries drives men to kill one another in private

# The Crowd in Peace and War

combat, and it might be shown to be far from a perfect guide of conduct under all circumstances. No! the guide to a perfect mutual morality is the whole group of Christian virtues, and greatest amongst them is Charity. Love is the fulfilling of all the law of mutual conduct, and he that sins against his fellow-man sins always against love. Love is the sufficient stimulus that forms and quickens the mutual conscience. It operates only between individuals. It has no relation to the crowd. The crowd, indeed, conscious of the power of love, attempts to confuse the individual mind and to impose on it, the duty of collective loving; but this is mere crowd-speech, the flower of rhetoric, nothing more. If anyone doubts it let him attend some big public meeting and gaze at the audience from the platform. Then let him, retaining if he can a perfectly detached attitude towards the enthusiasms of the multitude, ask himself does he, can he, actually and truly love that seething assemblage, love it with an emotion wholly the same as the emotion he feels towards a human friend? Of course he cannot. He may generate towards it within himself a share of the crowd's enthusiasm. That is not love. Only by confusing his own mind with crowd-passions and mistaking his share of them for individual emotion can he deceive himself into the belief that he loves mankind. He may be possessed by an enthusiasm of humanity, but he can only love individual men, not mankind.

The human crowd, however, exists and must always exist. Each one of us must belong to many crowds and our lives and feelings must be to a greater or less extent conditioned by them. Hence individuals in a gregarious

## Morals

world are necessarily involved in a third and more complicated morality, which we may designate as social. Social Morality is independent alike of individual and of mutual morality, which remain the same whether the individual be living as a Crusoe, as one of a family, or as the unit of a crowd. His own well-being of body and mind and that of those personally associated with him are as much matter for pursuit by him under the one condition as under the other, so long as what is good for him does not prove to be bad for the crowd. When that happens a conflict is set up and interesting problems arise for solution.

Social morality bears to crowds the same relation that individual morality bears to individuals, but with this practical difference, that, whereas the unit imposes his own individual morals upon himself, the crowd imposes social morals upon the unit, and in so doing regards not his well-being but its own. The crowd being, as by hypothesis we are regarding it, a kind of beast, not human, but built up of human units, as living tissue is built up of cells, and the crowd having a life of its own, in some ways superior, in others inferior, to the life of its component individuals, possesses a corresponding number of interests of its own, altogether different from and independent of the interests of those individuals. These are the interests involved in the preservation, growth, higher development, and healthy persistence of the said social organism or particular crowd for the time being under consideration, whether it be national, municipal, religious, or of any other sort.

The national crowd or great public is the important morality-making power, to which all minor crowds are,

# The Crowd in Peace and War

in this matter, of insignificant importance. The well-being of the nation as a whole is the sole interest of the national crowd. To it all individuals are alike. All are mere units, one as good as another. The individual's powers, interests, preferences, capacities, accomplishments, do not come within its ken, unless they are employed representatively in its service. It cares no more for the life of one of them than for that of another, except in the case of a crowd-representative. Leaving crowd-representatives out of account, all other men are to it of equal value and all alike are to be subordinated to its interests and if need be, sacrificed to those interests.

The crowd accordingly, by every means in its power, strives to impose this subserviency upon the individual. It stigmatises as crimes those actions which are obviously injurious to the social organism and which can be defined and are capable of proof. Against these formal laws are enacted and enforced by representative executive authority. It stigmatises as vices actions injurious to the individual or those which injure itself in a vague manner and cannot be precisely defined, proved, and prevented by force. These it attempts to suppress by the power of public reprobation and by the exercise of every kind of restraint that education, tradition, social structure, and any other discoverable agency employable in its service can bring to bear. Further, the crowd that imposes morals is not the mere body of living folk at any given moment in the country or to be numbered in the nation. It includes the generations that have passed. Morals are not the invention of the people of to-day; they have been slowly produced and continuously devel-

## Morals

oped and handed down in the long process of time. A given generation may add to them or give them a slightly new direction, but that is all. They are the product of the cumulative public opinion of many generations, and the purpose of them now and always is and has been to promote the collective health and general well-being of the national crowd.

It is evident that it matters nothing to the individual whether he flourishes in health and happiness in consequence of his individual morality or in consequence of his accordancy with a healthy crowd-morality. Nor would it really matter to a nation whether all its units were to flourish for the one reason or for the other. If every individual, going his own way and following his own rule of conduct, were to obtain happiness, a country would be filled with happy individuals without any help from a crowd-morality. But this the crowd can never be expected to conceive. No public opinion ever really approves of individual success. A man for instance may keep a private school and turn out from it a succession of fine young fellows impregnated with noble ideals and perfectly fitted for the struggle of life. Such a private venture will never be regarded sympathetically by the crowd, which is driven by its own nature to desire control over all the formative agencies that go to fashion a coming generation. It insists directly or indirectly on having its morality imposed everywhere and on every one, and it desires to take security that so it shall be.

It is not, however, the formal and legal imposition of crowd-morality that is most important, but the informal and indirect. This imposition is effected by public

# The Crowd in Peace and War

opinion enforcing upon the minds of all what it calls the laws of right and wrong. Those things are held up to us as right which are beneficial to the crowd; those things as wrong which are injurious to it. Thus recently we came for a time very near to a condition in which a man would have found himself regarded as doing a wrong action if he drank a glass of wine. The body politic, we were told, was suffering from alcohol, which some of its units were drinking too freely. Those who did so undoubtedly sinned against individual morality, but, if that were all, the crowd would have been profoundly indifferent. It is only when the crowd as such suffers by the action of individuals that it begins to talk of right and wrong. As soon as it obtains an emotional realisation that a given act is injurious to the collective body it directs public opinion, and presently also by its aid the law, against that act, and knowing as it does no difference of persons, but regarding all as units, it discountenances the act in all and tries to put an end to it universally.

Under such circumstances an opposition may readily arise between individual and crowd morality. Alcohol may be advantageous to a given individual; it may be helpful to his digestion or even to his mind. No matter! If it hurts the crowd by the misuse of some, he must give up drinking it; or at least every effort the crowd can make shall be employed to drive him to give it up. This concrete instance is merely one of a countless number that might be cited where the interest of the crowd and the interest of the individual may be at variance and where the crowd endeavours, often with success, to make its conception of its own interest prevail.



## Morals

The most prominent and important sphere within which the crowd's interest has been made to prevail over that of individuals is in the relation of the sexes, or rather of individuals of opposite sex. The loose first phrase I was there betrayed into using is one of crowd-manufacture, confusing the true issue. The relation between the sexes should mean nothing else than the relation of the mass of men, regarded as one crowd, with the mass of women, regarded as another crowd. That relation is obviously a crowd affair, but has small practical importance. Very different, however, is the personal relation between two individuals of opposite sex. That is the most individual affair in the whole range of human relations, and is one with which an observer from another planet might suppose that the crowd would have nothing to do. It is, however, in this matter that the crowd is for ever attempting to be most despotic, and were it not that the individual is much cleverer and more inventive than any crowd can be, and is usually able to outwit a crowd if he or she sets his or her mind so to do, crowd-despotism over sexual relations would have been completely established long ago.

A paper lies before me, one of a thousand such and not more authoritative, where some journalist has set down in plain language the crowd point of view on this question; wherein it is contended:

“That marriage consists in the union of the sexes for  
“such a term, and under such conditions, as will result  
“in the production of the maximum number of offspring  
“capable of surviving, in each particular species, climate,  
“and grade of civilisation.

# The Crowd in Peace and War

“That marriage is therefore to be regarded neither “from the point of view of the male, nor from that of the “female, but solely from that of the race.”

There you have the whole contention in a nutshell, and nothing could be less in harmony with the interests of many individuals. Marriage from the point of view of an individual is not primarily a union for the production of children at all, but for the mutual company and happiness of two people who find joy in the presence of one another. The desire of two mutually loving persons for the possession of one another is their purpose in marriage, and the last thing most lovers are thinking of is the benefit of the race. When, however, a child is born, a third individual has to be considered with its interests, its own individual interests, not those of the crowd in it, and the attitude of the parents has to take account of the needs of the child, and that whether there be a society around to interfere in its behalf or not. All this belongs to the sphere of mutual morality.

From the point of view of the individual, and where there are no children, the whole purpose of marriage ceases when love ceases, and the desire for mutual companionship is at an end. But from the point of view of the social crowd the marriage relation bears so important a part in social structure that all marriages are put on an equality, after the crowd's happy-go-lucky way of dealing with units, and once entered into with its consent and under its auspices can only with the greatest difficulty be dissolved. Indeed, the crowd would not allow the dissolution of marriages under any circumstances if experience had not made it feel that worse evils can arise to

## Morals

it from undissolved wrecked unions than if the worst of them are allowed to be dissolved. In allowing such dissolutions, however, the crowd is not to be regarded as in the smallest degree considering the interests and happiness of the individuals concerned, but only its own interests. One proof of this will suffice. If the interest of individuals were contemplated, a very important consideration would be whether there were any children of the marriage in question, and childless marriages would be treated differently from fertile marriages. Both, however, are treated by the law of divorce exactly alike.

Divorce, however, is only an extreme case, where the relations between individual men and women come out into the open and are handled by courts of law. The crowd acts far more intimately in these matters upon individuals and imposes or attempts to impose its will upon them in a much more subtle and usually effectual manner, by aid namely of public opinion and of conscience. Take again a concrete instance and observe how the individual is controlled. There exists in most women the instinct of motherhood, one of the most powerful instincts in humanity. Unless the individual woman can satisfy this instinct under the ægis of matrimony, a weight of hostile public opinion is brought against her which few are strong enough to resist. So furious and insane is this opprobrium that it usually also blasts more or less completely the young life that springs from an unrecognised union. More wonderful than all is it that in this matter the effective force employed is the public opinion of the great body of women, which seldom declares itself as a separate power except in this relation. The reason is obvious

# The Crowd in Peace and War

enough. Women throughout the ages have depended in the main on the support of men. Each woman has needed to have a man for her supporter, and the sexual attraction which Nature has given her, backed by social sanctions, has been the means whereby she has obtained support throughout the whole of her life and not merely in her youth. It follows that a woman who gives herself to a man and becomes a mother without securing from him the life-support so essential for the general body of women, seems to do an injury to that general body, even if she does a benefit to herself. The public opinion of women, based upon the experience of all past generations, is turned against the offender, and it would take a very strong character indeed to face that opprobrium and to be satisfied with motherhood, where motherhood and not wifehood was her desire.

If throughout long ages women had been self-supporting and had been able to make their livelihood independently of men, it is safe to assert that this attitude of the whole sex toward the unmarried mother would never have arisen; and it may be concluded that, now that women are making themselves more and more self-supporting, a change is likely to come slowly about in the feminine attitude toward not the "weaker" but really the stronger and more independent sister. Even in the past, women of genius, great actresses, singers, artists, and the like, have often set public opinion at defiance and have refused, and successfully refused, to permit their right to motherhood and wifehood to be defined and circumscribed by public opinion; and public opinion, finding itself powerless against the independent action of strong individuals, has

## Morals

regretfully beheld them go their own way, and has continued to accept them as esteemed and even glorious personages. It is really because such women are obviously self-supporting that they have been able to conquer and preserve their liberty. Probably, therefore, as the number of self-supporting women increases, their freedom to determine the character of their own relations to men will correspondingly develop.

So-called sexual morality, and several other moralities, based merely on what is the interest of a crowd, stand on but a poor foundation. When nothing but public opinion opposes individual passion, especially if, as may happen, that passion is not in itself ignoble, public opinion is likely enough to be flouted. The firm and solid foundation for a good and beautiful relation between individuals, whether of opposite or of the same sexes, is what we have called mutual morality. The relations between two individuals have nothing to do with the public, nothing to learn from the opinion of any crowd large or small. They are only governed by the same duties, the same self-sacrifices, the same mutual consideration on which Christianity is founded, and these are determined not by law, not by public sentiment, but by the love and kindness which each owes to each. Here, however, we touch a branch of our subject which can be better treated in a chapter to itself later on.

Returning to the illustration above cited from contemporary experience of the attitude of public opinion under the stress of war to what is called the drink-question, it may be made to serve a further purpose in introducing us to an obscure and little considered agency,

## The Crowd in Peace and War

whereby the crowd attempts to dominate the individual in its own interests. We passed through a stage of propaganda which began to be successful. The public interest in the question was aroused. The King, as national representative, ordered the consumption of alcoholic drinks to be discontinued in his palaces. Other influential persons followed his example. It almost became "bad form" to be seen drinking a glass of wine. Just as society in the nineteenth century made public intoxication shameful and thus largely put an end to it, so perhaps society may attempt to put an end to the public consumption of intoxicants even in moderation. Assume that to happen and to be maintained. Parents will then be telling their children that it is wrong to drink wine or spirits. Virtuous persons will assume the new custom of abstinence to be axiomatic. Before long this general attitude will begin to implant in sensitive individuals an emotion of shame at the mere thought of transgression. Abstinence will become a matter of conscience and every "good citizen" will come to possess a conscience equipped with this further inhibitory reflex emotion toward the mere suggestion of drink.

It is not difficult to add to the activities of a lively conscience. I knew, for example, an old lady who had been brought up to think card-playing wrong, and that playing-cards were implements of the devil. Her conscience would not permit her to handle them. She would have been unhappy for days if she had permitted herself to offend it in this particular. Yet she loved the harmless game of Patience, which she willingly played with slips of cardboard numbered from one to thirteen. Those

## Morals

were not the devil's playing-cards, and her conscience permitted her to use them without offence. Here conscience may be said to have been superfluously active. On the other hand it is easy to cite instances where conscience is as remarkably dull. Thus to avail oneself of a man's services against his will is generally described as robbing him of what is justly his. Yet quite honorable and upright citizens of the United States, in the long period preceding the present days of international copyright, were not pricked by their consciences when they purchased "pirated" editions of the works of English authors, nor do I think it would be affirmed that the American publishers of such editions regarded themselves or were regarded as dishonest persons. Their consciences gave them no trouble on this score. International copyright was at last brought about, not because piracy was considered to be wrong, nor on account of any public ideal of honesty, but simply because American authors found it difficult to make a living in competition with "pirated" publications.

A beheaded frog, though dead, will still for some hours move one of its legs to rub away a drop of acid applied to certain spots on its body. This action is called reflex. The nerve irritation caused by the acid sends a message to a centre in the spinal cord, where it stimulates a motor nerve and causes the reflex movement of the limb.<sup>1</sup> No intervention of thought is required. The nervous structure of the creature's body is such that the stimulus directly causes the reflex action without the intervention

<sup>1</sup> I hope this statement is physiologically correct, but am writing only from memory of what I believe myself to have been told.

# The Crowd in Peace and War

of the brain. In human beings a great number of movements are reflex. Moreover habit, by linking together certain nerve centres, tends to make many movements, originally voluntary, become more and more nearly reflex by frequent repetition in response to a recurrence of the same stimulus. The business of conscience is to produce in the moral domain a correspondingly automatic response to definite stimuli or, as we call them, temptations. It is the business of conscience to provide the individual tempted with an automatic reaction against temptation. If it were possible to make conscience a hereditary instinct, all men would in time become by birth completely moral beings, and would behave in a moral fashion as instinctively as a bird builds its nest. Acquired characteristics, however, are not inherited. The conscience of each has therefore to be built up, and this is accomplished by habit and instruction, backed and enforced by public opinion, whose operation on the young is particularly efficient.

The main effort of parents and responsible persons is to implant conscience within children before their minds have had time to take independent shape. That is why conscience is often most vigorous with the young. They have no other guide of life. The development and reform of conscience is the work of later life by the assertion of individuality. Diverge from the prescribed norm and conscience protests; hold to the divergence and conscience atrophies as far as the particular divergence is concerned. But this guiding Social Conscience: What is it? Clearly it is nothing more than the voice of the crowd speaking in and to the individual. The inward voice saying that



## Morals

this or that is wrong has no other sanction than the general opinion of the society in which the individual grew up. Did not Huckleberry Finn's conscience prick him severely for a low-down immoral lad because he assisted a nigger to hide who was believed to be a runaway slave?

The ancient Egyptians at the time of the eighteenth dynasty had already recognised the social conscience, which they called the heart, as the guide to a comfortable crowd-harmonising life, likely to lead to prosperity. Here is what a doubtless estimable person had to say of himself on his own tombstone:

"This is my character to which I have borne witness, "and there is no exaggeration therein. . . . It is my "heart that caused me to act through its guidance unto "me. It was an excellent prompter unto me; I did not "infringe its commands; I feared to transgress its guidance. Therefore I prospered exceedingly, and was "fortunate on account of that which it caused me to do; "I succeeded by reason of its guidance. Of a sooth, true "is that which is said by men: 'It (the heart) is the voice "of God that is in everybody; happy is he whom it has "led to a good course of action!'"

How the priests of Amen instilled this rudimentary idea of conscience into their people is not recorded. The mediæval Christian Church accomplished that end by aid of confession. Confession enabled the voice of the Church to pronounce judgment on the sins of the individual. The voice of the priest was the voice of the Christian crowd. By education, tradition, environment, and equipment the priest was efficiently shaped into conformity with the ideal of the Church. Thus, whereas Protestantism at

# The Crowd in Peace and War

a later date and by reaction enthroned the individual conscience, Catholicism has always enthroned the collective conscience, the voice of the crowd. If confession had been optional, the individual might have called in the help of the crowd if and when he pleased, but confession being compulsory the crowd conscience was thereby forcibly imposed on the individual. Moreover the power of this imposition was enhanced by the formalities that preceded and accompanied it, their purpose being to bring the penitent into a mild form of hypnotic trance. In that condition the subject becomes peculiarly susceptible to the influence of suggestion. He will accept implicitly what is told him by the operator and the impression received may survive after his emergence from the trance. This is why the sacerdotal churches, without actually resorting to hypnotism, do all they can to heighten the power of suggestion and the authority of the priestly operator.

Alas! the Social Conscience is only the voice of God in so far as the voice of the people is the voice of God. Conscience can be nothing more than a measure of the divine inspiration in the crowd. Yet no wise man will underrate either its value or its power. Has it not been said that "Conscience doth make cowards of us all"? That is not because it is the voice of God, but because it is the voice of the multitude. Many individuals fear not God, but few indeed are they who do not instinctively fear the Crowd, and are strong enough in their individuality to be able to stand against it — to say openly the unpatriotic thing, to confess the unorthodox faith in an orthodox world, to do what is unpopular, to take their own line in spite of public opinion. It is conscience that makes

## Morals

them cowards; the voice of the crowd within is even more potent than the voice of the crowd without. Granted that public opinion and the ideals of different crowds are the most powerful agency for the development of individuals. Granted that conscience is the agency by which this development is accomplished. It is likewise true that the same agency may be and often is equally employed to impose absurd restrictions on the freedom of the individual, and to make him abstain from actions on the ground that they are wrong, which in fact are perfectly innocent, though believed by the crowd to be injurious to its interests.

All that conscience can accomplish, be its possessor never so docile to its promptings, is to make that individual live the comfortable kind of life that results from fitting perfectly into his place in his various crowds. The model schoolboy, the ideal undergraduate, the orthodox churchman or chapel member, the good party man, the convinced and disciplined trades-unionist, the public-spirited citizen — such lead easy lives; their ways are made plain before them; their problems are solved without debate. Their consciences are at peace, and this will be so whether the society of their day be in fact on the up-grade or the down-grade, whether public opinion be healthy or debased, whether the national ideal be high or low. The individual who decides to go his own way, basing his actions upon the judgment of his own reason, will have many a difficulty to face which the other avoids. Such an individual may be a great prophet, an original seer, a man among men; he may perchance be a great criminal. In either case he stands outside the crowd, above it

# The Crowd in Peace and War

or below, its light or its foe, oftenest perhaps its foe. The crowd's emotion of hostility to the independent individual is not after all without some justification.

The value of conscience, as of public opinion, within proper limits is not to be denied. It is the irrational machine-like obedience to them which marks the commonplace individual. A fully developed intelligence will make both subservient to an enlightened reason, but the duty lies on him to see that his reason really is enlightened. Mere mechanical morality is a deadly thing. It is inconsistent with, even antagonistic to, charm. The person whose every thought and act can be predicted, whose voice is the voice of the crowd, whose life is that of the normal crowd-unit — such an one will of necessity be devoid of charm. The secret of charm is a beautiful spontaneity and unexpectedness, a spontaneity of action, thought, and speech, welling forth from the fullness of a rich and individual nature, an attitude governed by emotions of kindness and love to individuals, in accordance with nature, but regardless of public prejudice and popular judgment. Such a person's conscience is a law unto itself. If originally formed, as all young consciences are, by the impact of the notions of the society into which he was born, it has been developed, enlightened, and corrected by reflection and experience. It looks not to the ideals of others but to its own reason and to nature for its sanctions; it grows not with accretions from without but by evolution from within. It is a force unlike any other, and the man who tends and follows its light is little likely to go far astray in the journey of life toward its undefinable but not therefore unattainable goal.

## CHAPTER XIV

### RELIGION

IF man does in fact possess the twofold nature here assumed, and is governed now by his social instincts and now by his own individual reason, it is obviously important to inquire, What is the relation of this twofold nature to religion? Is religion a part of his individual or his crowd equipment? Is his God the God of men or of Mankind? Is the relation of man to God a personal or a collective relation? or does it partake of both characters, and, if so, in what degrees? These are questions so obvious and so important that a large literature might be expected to exist concerning them, and yet I am not aware that they have received any formal consideration whatever, though on this, as on so many other matters of fact in relation to so vast and obscure a subject, I cannot assume to be fully informed. As the reader will long before this have perceived, my remarks are in the nature of the tentative suggestions of an individual, and every word I write is set down with full consciousness of its merely personal value. All is tentative, the groping of a solitary traveller in the dark, through an unmapped region. It is with the utmost humility that any suggestion is made for the guidance of others, and that especially in the case of the vague, difficult, and profoundly important area which we now approach.

# The Crowd in Peace and War

Man hovers in the midst of the infinite unknown like a firefly in the night, capable only of perceiving the tiny sphere which his own spark of light illumines. In the process of time that light has steadily increased in power, and the area illuminated by it has correspondingly expanded; but the infinite unknown still surrounds him, and his ideas about that can only be based on, or tested by, his knowledge of the finite illumined space around him. Religion is man's description of his ideas about the great unknown, his projection, on the darkness, of what he conceives that darkness to contain. It follows that the further back in time we go, the less enlightened will be man's religious ideas. Although in relation to the truth of things the difference between the most advanced human knowledge to-day and that of prehistoric man may not actually amount to much, the relative difference is still immense.

We shall not, therefore, gain much knowledge of the fundamentals of religion by following back its history and tracing its earliest discoverable forms, for the fundamentals of religion at any moment are not the errors it has inherited from the past, but the last and nearest approximations to truth which have been added by highest contemporary thought and imagination. The appealing interest of religious history is not the light it throws on religion but the light it throws on man. The history of chemistry is not a study that furthers chemical discovery; the man who would further that must master the latest ideas and need not trouble himself about alchemy. The history of religions is like a bowl of water drawn from the flooded upper Indus, clear and drinkable on the sur-

# Religion

face, but growing muddier and muddier below, and ending in a thick sediment of slime. Early religious ideas are not profound, but muddy. The pool is not deep because it is hard to see into; it is merely foul.

Thus in Greek religion the Olympian gods are notable and even splendid beings, but with many a low and even vile feature inherited by them from their filthy predecessors. In the hands of the great Greeks they were further purified and idealised, till they came to embody the glory of the sun, the power of the air, the immeasurable wonder of the sea, — elements of nature that still seem to us instinct with the splendour of the divine. It is this splendour of theirs we love, not the gloomy and horrible totems whose filth they have sloughed off. In those rudiments the divine qualities did not even exist in embryo. They were not evolved out of any germ in the mind of prehistoric man; they were added on, not disentangled. A glorious god is like some priceless ruby, just another form of alumina which differs little from clay in the material of which it is made; but in the presence of its inestimable beauty who cares what it is made of? It is the form of its structure, the power that crystallized it, that matters. We want the gem, not the mud. We may perhaps find it with some uncrystallized matter attached. If so we disentangle it from that, we even cut out its own imperfections, and what remains, perfect and complete, is the thing we worship. Thus also is it with the gods.

It follows that, for our present inquiry, we need not go back to origins. We have no concern with uncrystallized gods. We can begin with them when they themselves

# The Crowd in Peace and War

begin to be great and majestic beings whom the nations worshipped, — Bel of Babylon, Assur of Assyria, Jahve of the Israelites, Amen-Ra of Thebes, — gods who were masters of nations worth considering, gods who were worshipped by men in the van of human thought when thinking had begun. What then were those gods — those and their contemporaries? Were they not in every case the embodied ideal of a crowd, the expression of a national ideal, the focussed image of a nation's desires? In god and king the nation was incorporated, and god and king were closely allied. When Pharaoh advances into battle Horus flies over his head; above Sargon flies Assur; both together are the expression of the nation itself. In the wars of the nations the gods contend, and the god of the victorious nation rules over the gods of the defeated. These national gods are like him of Germany, the god of the Hohenzollerns, whom Kaiser Wilhelm invokes, the only survivor in the west down to these late days of the old pagan divinities.

By conquest nation swallowed up nation, and one national god consequently rose above others, thus forming pantheons under the hegemony of a chief. For several centuries the process went forward, till in the vast empire of Rome all the gods and worships of the united peoples were contained and confused together. The *pax romana* put the old fighting gods out of business; the absorption of nations into an empire weakened national ideals. Local divinities became almost meaningless and belief in them faded. Efforts were made to bring order into the chaos by identifying tribal gods, possessing similar characters but of many different lands, as different forms,



## Religion

local manifestations, of a single god. But the attempts logically to consolidate the multitudinous company of all the heavenly hosts in all the countries within the bounds of the Roman Empire could not succeed in the presence of an educated and highly critical society. Even the president of the Roman pantheon could not be raised to the height of an imperial divinity, and so the Roman Emperor himself had to submit to deification for purely practical purposes.

Thus it came to pass that, for the Hellenistic Greeks and the Romans, the gods withdrew into a loftier and mistier empyrean. Their old *raison d'être* was gone. They no longer incorporated the vital national ideals that had given them form. Each of them alone came to be an almost meaningless entity, a name and a memory but little more. At the same time the old national crowds were tending to dissolve. It was more to a man of Tarsus that he was a Roman citizen than that he was a Cilician. The great imperial over-crowd not merely submerged many of the national crowds it included, but caused them actually to disintegrate. Under such conditions there was no place for the national gods. There were no national ideals and passions for them to incorporate. The gods went the way of the kings, and *Roma caput mundi* took their place. But great as Rome was, great as was the position which the Roman Emperor filled, he might be called a god, worshipped as a god, but he failed, and could not but fail, to fill the spiritual role of a world-divinity in a civilised and reflective age.

The mere existence and success of the Roman Empire, therefore, implied the need for a divinity more compre-

# The Crowd in Peace and War

hensive than any that had been conceived before. No national god could serve. A world-god was needed, and the creative faculty to make and impose one on the vast population of the Empire seemed to be lacking. Egypt tried her hand; so did Persia; so did Judea; but all failed. The Sun itself was not divine enough, even when combined and identified with the Imperial power on earth. Some success here and there, in the military caste or in some other sections of the population, might be attained, but none of the competing religions succeeded for long. In the struggle for existence all the would-be imperial divinities were choked and faded away.

The reason is fairly obvious. It is to be found in the fact that Roman Imperialism never exalted itself into a world-embracing passion. The Roman Empire, though its system of government became fairly stable, though its laws took root among men, though its prestige for a few centuries was high and indeed became higher as its actual strength faded, never grouped and knitted together into a firm and self-conscious single crowd all the people of the Empire, as the people of Egypt or Judea or Assyria had been knitted and wrought together into nations. The Roman Empire was never one at heart as Ancient Egypt had been one. It follows that there did not exist the needed all-embracing passion that could find expression in a single imperial god. And yet a new and higher type of godhead was imperatively called for, all the old gods being worn out and having become incredible. It was a condition of things that never existed in the world before, and it produced a result

# Religion

which, as we look back on it, seems as though it might have been foretold.

Bear in mind that the *pax romana*, in that it was the cause of a loosening of national and other ancient social ties, in fact of a breaking up of old crowds into their constituent units, resulted in a relatively strong development of individualism. The first four centuries of our era produced a wonderful crop of well-marked and differentiated individuals. The Empire offered wide scope for individual initiative, individual administrative capacity, individual enterprise and resource. Never before had the mind of man been so free. Never were there fewer orthodoxies set up. Never before since civilisation began had the thoughts or actions of man been less tramelled.

It follows that if there was no call then for the revelation of a new imperial divinity, the moment had come for the revelation of a god with whom each individual could enter into personal relations; and this was what Christianity supplied. Had the Christians been able to impose on Rome in the second century a greater crowd-divinity than the world had known before, they might have given to the Roman Empire the unifying spiritual force which it lacked, and for lack of which it ultimately fell to pieces. But the Christian god was not of that sort. The whole teaching of Christianity as set forth by its Founder applies only to individuals. Christ did not contemplate crowds; his words contain no legislation for them. He did not come to save mankind but men. He did not address the enthusiasm of multitudes, but aimed at entering as "a still small voice" into the heart of each. There is not a word about crowd-ritual from him, noth-

## The Crowd in Peace and War

ing about great assemblages of the faithful. His followers are all thought of as coming to him one by one, each for a new heart, each intending thenceforward to love his neighbour. "Who is my neighbour?" asked an inquirer. What would be the answer to-day? Humanity, the suffering human crowd, the poor, the laggards in life's race who need to be collectively helped. That was not Christ's view. For him the neighbour was another individual, to be individually loved, tended, and helped. I need not enlarge upon this point. Anyone who knows the Gospels will have no difficulty in filling out the picture for himself, if he confines his attention to the recorded words ascribed to Christ. Thus it came to pass that the Christianity of Christ was the first widely successful individualistic religion the world had ever known, and that was why it was able to spread at the time when it appeared. The moment was ripe for a religion of personal holiness. The individual man wanted his soul saved, and Christ offered to save it. He called for a change of heart at a moment when many men desired, one by one, each after his own fashion, to attain a higher spiritual level. The Kingdom of Heaven which Christ promised was promised to each, and it was to be within each. The paradises of most prophets, what are they but Utopian socialistic states, with each individual fitted into his place and obedient to the common law and organisation? Christ's Kingdom was not of that sort. It depended on no organisation, no groupings of hierarchies. It was a state of mind, an internal happiness, the union of the individual with God, a condition independent of time, place, or circumstance, a dwelling in love, that is

# Religion

to say a dwelling of each believer severally in God and God in him.

The Christianity of Christ was in fact a disintegrating rather than a socially constructive religion. It sprang into existence when the old societies were falling to pieces, when the old ideals were dead, when the emotions that had united crowds together had lost their power to bind. The Gospel Christian was called upon to abandon home, relatives, dependents, property, everything, to the new life. He was called upon to love God and his neighbour — not the crowd of mankind but men, each individual man with whom he came in contact. He was to be a “come-outer.” He was to go forth and preach the gospel, trusting that the Lord would provide for him the necessities of life. His renunciation was to be complete.

It was impossible for Christianity long to retain this purely individualistic character. Its very success involved a change. As soon as Christians existed in any number they were forced by the nature of things to become communities, little crowds, and as soon as that happened the normal reactions of a crowd were set up. In Egypt indeed ultra-individualistic Christianity was carried on for a time by a vast number of hermits. That was because the hermit ideal already existed there. Buddhist missionaries from India are believed to have visited Egypt within two generations from the time of Alexander the Great. This mission is attributed to Asoka. Permanent traces of Buddhist influence from before the Christian era are said to be distinguishable there. Egyptian Gnosticism contained Buddhist elements as Syrian Gnosticism contained Persian. Philo describes Thera-

# The Crowd in Peace and War

peutæ or contemplative monks in Egypt, who seem to have sprung from the union of Alexandrian Judaism with the precepts and modes of life of Buddhist devotees. In their bodily mortifications, their abandonment to contemplation, we may trace such an affinity to Indian mystics as guarantees for both a common origin. Thus at Alexandria Greek philosophy, Judaism, Zoroastrianism, Buddhism, and the latest developments of the Egyptian religion all met and mingled. It was into this turgid medium, or out of it, that Christianity was born.

Small wonder then that in Egypt the followers of the new individualistic faith tried many an experiment. Multitudes of them, incited by Buddhist example, forsook all, went forth into desert caves and Egyptian hill-side tombs, and tried to lead a purely individualistic existence saving their own souls. But pure individualism is as fatal to what is best in man as pure socialism. The hermit life as led by these men was, says Mr. Norman Douglas, "an atavistic movement. Under the influence of their creed they reverted perforce to the more bestial traits of aboriginal humanity. They were thrust back in their development. They became solitaries, animalesque, and shy — such as we may imagine our hairy progenitors to have been. Hence their dirt and vermin, their horror of learning, their unkempt hair, their ferocious independence, their distrust of sunshine and ordered social life, their foul dieting, their dread of malign spirits, their cave-dwelling propensities — all bestial characteristics!" But the multiplication of these creatures terminated their isolation. They crowded one another into communities, and the necessities of common life wrought them into

# Religion

societies, incipient crowds, bound to develop along the lines which all crowds by the nature of man necessarily follow. This was the origin of monasticism.

If, even in the persons of hermits, the individualistic Christianity of Christ had to be socially transmuted, a corresponding development was far more imperatively called for in the case of Christian communities living in cities and consisting of men and women having to do the work of the world. In the Acts of the Apostles we can watch the young communities forming. The Epistles enable us to see the rudimentary difficulties they had to overcome. At Jerusalem they appear to have tried pure communism, a system apparently best in accord with the preaching ascribed to Christ himself, but that experiment has never succeeded anywhere, at any time of the world's history, and if the Christians of Palestine actually essayed it, with them too it failed. But wherever Christianity penetrated, communities had to take shape. "We being many," they learned to say, "are one body in Christ and every one members one of another."

St. Paul stands forth in the generation succeeding Christ as the great organiser of the new faith. He it was, before all others, who showed how to weld the faithful into an organic whole. He was the founder, not of Christianity, but of the Christian crowd. Membership of organised crowds is usually easy of definition. A member of a school, a university, a club, a society, a nation, becomes such by some definite public act. But by no public act can a man become a follower of Christ, as defined by Christ himself. A follower of Christ was one in whom the great change of heart demanded by Him had taken

## The Crowd in Peace and War

place. It was not enough to be baptised, or to become, like Judas, an avowed adherent. Open confession of discipleship did not make a man one of Christ's flock. The adhesion demanded by Him was an internal invisible change of attitude toward God and man, and this no outward test could ever avail to prove. Hence it was impossible to form a visible body solely consisting of members of Christ. A community of persons believing one another to be such might be formed, but there could be no certainty that all members of the community were in fact followers of Christ. So clearly was this recognised that it was from the beginning acknowledged that only at the Day of Judgment would a true separation be made between the sheep and the goats. If all members of Christian communities had become *ipso facto* "sheep," a Last Judgment of separation would not have been necessary. Hence the earliest Christian communities could only consist of persons who professed and called themselves Christians, submitted to the rites of initiation, and gave verbal acceptance to the formulæ of faith imposed upon them.

It follows that from the very start the Christianity of Christ and the Christianity of the Church were not identical. The one was defined by an internal change, the other by ceremonial and formula. No doubt a powerful effort was made, especially in early days, to obtain all possible evidence of the change of heart before a convert was permitted to undergo the ceremonies of initiation. A like effort was also collectively made to invent formulæ of faith which should enshrine the teaching of Christ, and that only; and the convert, by accepting those formulæ,



# Religion

was held to accept the teaching of Christ as the law of his life. But such were rough and ready criteria, which became less and less efficient as the Church grew in size and power, and altogether lost any efficiency when they were applied to young children and even infants. If the Christian Church of the first century consisted mainly of the true followers of Christ, the membership of the triumphant Church of the fourth century could not in the nature of things contain more than a relatively small minority of such. Between the crowd-opinion of such a Christendom and the pure Gospel of the Founder of Christianity there had therefore to be a wide divergence.

Formal Christianity, differing as it has patently differed from age to age and from country to country, has at each epoch and place been the public opinion of the particular Christian crowd then and there existent. Just as Liberalism is not any definite set of formulated principles, but is the ideal of the crowd called liberal from time to time, and consequently has varied so widely as to have aimed at one time towards ends which it has shunned at another; so Christianity, starting at first with the impulse of Christ himself and the passion kindled by him in his disciples, was then the expression of that passion, but only then. A crowd including all who professed and called themselves Christian once formed, the Christianity of the future was whatever that crowd should make it. It was bound to become the expression of the independent life of that crowd and to take on the forms that the crowd would from time to time impose upon it.

The Christian crowd, like any other, as soon as it came into existence possessed a life of its own, and, as its vital

# The Crowd in Peace and War

principle possessed great force, the Christian crowd had a long life before it, and consequently required a long period of relatively slow growth such as all long-lived crowds begin with. This growth, no doubt, was consequential on the character of the originating germ, as the growth of an oak is consequential on the nature of an acorn; yet the ultimate full-grown tree is also fashioned by external circumstances of soil, climate, and the action of animals, and so also what the Church was to come to was decided not only by the seed of life implanted in it by its Founder, but by the circumstances of the world in which it flourished. So long as the Christian Church exists as a continuous crowd, reaching back to its Founder by an unbroken sequence of individuals, and whether divided into sub-crowds or not, it has a right to claim that it enshrines the Spirit of that Founder, for such continuity of spirit is the essential property of all long-lived crowds. But the original strain becomes in process of time a very small factor in the ultimate growth, as the history of any church or any nation suffices to demonstrate.

From the very nature of all crowds it follows that the Christian crowd in its earliest beginnings had to be organised as it grew. In proportion to the strength of its organisation the individuality of its members became circumscribed. The first followers of Christ were a number of detached individuals, and their faith was altogether individualistic. The full-grown mediæval church was a powerful socialism, into which each individual was fitted and shaped for his place, no opportunity being left for individual divergence of faith. The followers of Christ gave themselves to Him — body and soul.

# Religion

Mediaeval Christians were born into an organic body which imposed on them a complete set of doctrines and a perfected ritual which they were compelled to accept and follow. No two conditions could be more radically different. But the impulse given by Christ could not have endured in this world unless it had been carried on by a crowd, and that impulse in the hands of a crowd had to become social, and had to lose its individualistic form. The social shaping of Christendom was only begun by the early Church, and is a work never finished but only handed on from age to age to be reshaped according to the ideals of each. Thus it could not but come about, if Christianity was to survive at all, that it must take on different shapes in different parts, and in particular that the apparently fundamental difference of nature between the peoples of the East and of the West must bring about marked divergencies between Eastern and Western forms and formulæ.

As soon as the organisation of the mixed crowd of true and merely professing Christians began to take shape, and the necessity of things involved the development of ritual and the definition of sacred scriptures and dogmas, an accretion of conceptions and traditions from earlier religious bodies could not be avoided. Christ contemplated the gathering together of "two or three" in His name, and for them neither ritual nor liturgy was needed; but when assemblies grew to contain hundreds and even thousands of worshippers both rituals and liturgies became essential. Worship itself, however, was no new thing. Men had worshipped to the best of their powers since the earliest times of which we have record. Ritual had thus

## The Crowd in Peace and War

been elaborated, many rituals, and, though we know little about them, we know the sufficient fact that elaborate religious rituals did exist all over the civilised world at the time when Christianity was taking shape. The mere fact that the object of worship was changed — however simplified and elevated — did not render existing rituals wholly valueless. The individualistic follower of Christ did not need them for private worship in his own chamber, but the mixed Christian crowd did need them, and could not do otherwise than adapt to collective Christian worship such portions of existing rituals as might be made to serve that purpose.

So also was it with dogma; so too with the forms required by the legend-making instinct, which is always present in crowds, though at that time it was much stronger than in our own day it remains, corrected and controlled as it now is by the serious impediment of the prolific printing-press. Any crowd at that time possessed the then existing raw material of legend and of dogma in its own heart. Its passion of admiration for a man could only find expression in the forms then existent. Its faith, if it was to be expressed for it in any form of words at all, could only use the dogmatic forms then existing. Thus the Christian crowd in its struggles to grow, to organise and define itself, and to get expression for the vitality within it, had perforce to use many a pagan form and ceremonial, which by degrees became modified under the stress of internal and exterior contention.

The individualism of original Christianity continued to manifest itself in one respect, long after individual freedom had been suppressed within the Christian body.

# Religion

This was in the semi-deification granted by the Christian crowd to its leaders, living and dead. No great religious movement in the world has produced so many outstanding individual leaders as Christianity. It was not the Founder alone who remained a great inspiring Individual. The early Christian centuries are signalised by the number of great names they have handed down, and of marked and influential personalities whose individual characters have been recorded and are held in honour. Such are the Fathers and the uncounted multitude of the Saints. Many of these latter, indeed, never in fact existed, but were creations of the legend-making imagination of the crowd,—Christianised forms in some cases of ancient local gods, in others mere creatures of inspired fancy. But even when they were true historical personages, the crowd, reacting as crowds will from the effect produced upon them by some compeller, cast back on to the memory of the great man some of the emotion he had aroused in them, and thus invested him with imaginary powers and miraculous accomplishments, expressed in forms essentially poetic. The legends of the saints, though thus in form often untrue, were in fact the quite truthful expression of the crowd's emotions when those legends arose, and this whether the saints in question had been real people, or wholly or partly the creation of fancy. In so far as they were saints it was the aspect of them which the crowd's fancy beheld, and to which it gave legendary shape, that was fashioned into sainthood, and thus all saints are to be regarded as creations of fancy even when fancy had a historical personage to crystallize around.

If the great leaders who create new crowds, or give a

## The Crowd in Peace and War

new direction to crowds existent, are of necessity very interesting personages for the student of history, the great personages who never existed at all, but were created by the fancy of crowds, are no less important and often far more delightful. Nay, of some of them it may be affirmed that they have done more for the uplifting of the hearts of successive generations than was accomplished by any save a very few actually once alive heroes. Only since the days in which contemporary written records of events have been made, with the intent of truthful narration, has it been possible to draw any kind of fairly definite line between what a person actually was and what the crowd thought him to be, — with the result that epic poetry has been banished off the face of the earth. Go further back and you arrive (very soon too) at a time in which individual fact and social legend are so inextricably interwoven that it is impossible to separate them. The ideal characters of the past are not so much the images of individuals who once lived as they are incarnations of the human crowd in the midst of which they acted; and the crowd, in describing them, pictured its own aspirations.

Thus Roland of the Song, which Taillefer sang before the host at Hastings — what was he but the ideal of knightly courage and honour? There was indeed a noble soldier, Hruodland, governor of the Breton March, who fell in a rear-guard action at Roncesvalles, when Charlemagne was returning over the Pyrenees from a rather inglorious campaign in Spain. Nothing more is known about him; but that he died a glorious death may well have been a true tradition. Upon that single fact a vast legendary structure was built up, when the growing spirit

## Religion

of chivalry seized upon the romantic times of the founder of the Holy Roman Empire and expressed its young and splendid ideals in the form of the mediæval Carlovingian legend. This could not have happened had there been contemporary newspaper reporters to set down the facts. The story of early Christianity is similarly glorified by the projection back on to the past of the ideals of triumphant Christianity. Thereby was produced, not the bald narrative of mere events, but the splendidly imaginative and truly inspired narrations, which crystallized and expressed in vital and undying form the faith by which the whole of Christian society was quickened, and fashioned into a crowd palpitating with life — the life which reorganised Europe after the destruction of the social organism that had been Rome.

The Christian crowd, though it replaced, did not destroy the Roman crowd. The Roman crowd died, worn out, when the gods died. It was because the Roman crowd was dying that the Christian crowd arose. It arose because it alone then fulfilled the needs of a day when the gods were dead. In the third century we behold the two crowds side by side, the one disintegrating, the other crystallizing; the one losing, the other gaining strength; the one saddled with the burden of a worn-out organisation and a dead faith, the other instinct with a new and formative vitality. The new crowd had to succeed, because it alone could absorb the inroading barbarians and thus fashion the new world. The Empire was therefore compelled to unite itself to the new Church, whose hierarchies already possessed a considerable power of government which imperial officers were tending to lose.

# The Crowd in Peace and War

Thus before long the Roman world became nominally Christian, and the organisation of the Christian crowd could not remain a voluntary matter but had to be an affair of laws and compulsion, thereby opening a wider gulf between the individualistic religion of the Founder and the organised socialistic religion raised upon that foundation.

Primitive Christianity, however, though thus covered out of sight, never entirely ceased from the earth. Its true nature could not be wholly forgotten while the Christian scriptures remained accessible to whoever could read. Individual followers of Christ, though not in all ages discoverable by the historian, must always have existed; and from time to time they made efforts to revive the individualistic religion of the Founder. Such efforts, however, could not be favourably regarded by the official class of the organised Church. Sometimes they adopted, but only to regulate, a particular movement; sometimes they forcibly suppressed one. All mystics are individualistic Christians. Mysticism has always been in fact a revolt, more or less clearly perceived to be such, against the formal Christianity of the organised Church. It would be interesting to follow down through the centuries the successive emergings of the individualistic Christian spirit; but that would lead us too far. When at length the printing press spread the Bible abroad and placed it in the hands of all who could read, the greatest of such reactions took place, and the Reformation was the result. Then the essential opposition between the Christianity of the Gospels, with its appeal to the individual, and the Christianity of the Church, with all its socialistic



# Religion

sanctions and organisations, became patent; and the Bible was openly recognised as a danger to the organised body.

But the new individualistic Christians of Reformation days were no better able than the Early Christians had been to maintain existence without themselves becoming a crowd. As soon as they did so, the new crowd reacted upon its religion in exactly the same way as before: dogmas, ritual, organisation, orthodoxy, compulsion — in fact the identical sequence repeated. And then new individualistic revolts took place against the new bodies, as before against the old; and the end is not yet. Moreover, the new bodies in their turn became entangled with the State just as the early Church had been entangled with the Empire. Wars of religion followed, in the name of Christ, till the very nadir of the Christianity of Christ was reached when the ridiculous but practical peace-treaty formula was arrived at — *cujus regio ejus religio*!

Yet the vitality of individualistic Christianity is no less strong to-day than it was in the First Century. Whenever social Christianity breaks down, as by the wearing out of its organisation it frequently must, there is individualistic Christianity waiting in the background potentially ready to take its place. The relation between the individual and "the man Christ Jesus" is one that depends upon no organisation, no Church, no State recognition. It may be as vital to-day as eighteen hundred years ago. It is the force that Christian reformers of all ages fall back upon. The "love of Christ" constrains them, not the power of the Church, and because it constrains each individually it may operate anywhere and at any time, altogether independently of social organisms, or

# The Crowd in Peace and War

governments, or dogmas, or rituals. Thus it remains to this day the single indestructible vital force by which the Christianity of Christ has kept returning to a world whose socialistic tendencies must always operate to drive it away.

We often hear the phrase, "a Christian nation." It is claimed that a Christian nation should adopt a certain kind of policy and should refrain from certain acts as unworthy of it. Now there is not and never can be such an entity as a Christian nation. The adjective and the noun are incompatible; they mutually exclude one another. Christianity is the religion of men. An elephant cannot be a Christian. Christianity postulates an individual man with a human body, mind, and soul of his own. A crowd possesses none of these elements. It is a beast, admittedly of high order, but it is not a man and does not possess the normal qualities and equipment of a man. Men can be Christians and can show their Christianity in their conduct to one another and even in their attitude towards crowds; but crowds cannot act as Christians towards one another. An individual crowd cannot be a Christian; contemporary crowds cannot form a Christian society. Only men can form a society. Entirely independent crowds, such as nations, cannot be governed by the laws of Christ, which were not laid down for them any more than for tigers. The laws of Christ apply only to men. Crowds are another sort of animal.

It is assumed that a society, all of whose units are Christians, is necessarily a Christian society; that a society all of whose units conduct their lives on Christian principles will necessarily conduct its collective life on those prin-

## Religion

ciples. Nothing could be less true. Neither internally in the relation of the State to individual citizens, nor externally in the relation of State to State, can the Christianity of Christ control crowds. A Chinese official wrote, "Your "civilisation has never been Christian, whereas ours is "Confucian through and through. . . . With you economic "relations come first." The reason is simple. Confucius thought in terms of crowds, Christ in terms of individual men. Therefore the Chinese "look first to the "society and then to the individual;" Christianity regards the individual. Only the Judaism beneath it is a true crowd-religion.

The relations between one crowd and another are not of the same kind as the relations between two individuals. The latter may be Christians and may behave to one another as such, but crowds cannot be Christians at all, not being men. Nations indeed conduct their mutual relations through individuals, but those cannot act as independent men would act, because they are not independent men but crowd-representatives, and they must act as their crowds would have them. Two diplomatists may have a deep affection for one another, and yet it may be their business to declare to one another that their nations are at war. The relations of crowd-representatives then cannot be governed by the principles that govern the relations of independent individuals. The latter may behave to one another as Christians; the former cannot. It is the first duty of Christians to love one another. How is that possible for crowds? If love is the fulfilling of the law, crowds cannot fulfil the law. Crowds cannot love one another. They may join in hostility to a third

# The Crowd in Peace and War

crowd, and, in consequence of co-operating against it, they may come to value one another, so long as that co-operation lasts; but that is all. They cannot love one another as men love. The power of mutually loving does not reside in crowds. Conceive, if you can, of a crowd that was "meek and lowly of heart," and of one that "turned its back to the smiter." It is needless to multiply illustrations. Would it have been possible for the Sermon on the Mount to be delivered to the sovereigns of a number of countries, not as individuals but as kings? It would have had no application to their circumstances. As individuals they could singly, of course, have been thus addressed, but not as the executive officers of peoples, acting on the advice of responsible ministers, themselves the expression of the emotion of their crowds.

"Come unto me all ye that are weary and heavy laden and I will give you rest," said Christ. The words would be meaningless addressed to a social organism. Christianity is concerned not only with the present but with the future life of men. It offers them salvation or damnation in a world to come. What world to come can there be for the Roman Empire? Christianity has nothing to offer to crowds, which have no soul to be saved, no world to come to expect, and which look not to a future life but to a long life on earth, exceeding manyfold the life-time of a generation.

The only kind of religion possible to a nation is one of the type of the ancient pagan national religions, in which the nation worshipped itself in a deified form. Conceivably all the crowds in the world might be united in a collective worship of humanity, and that may even some

# Religion

day come to pass in a form we cannot yet conceive. Such a religion, however, will be one altogether unsuited to the needs of individuals. We cannot invent or conceive of a religion suited equally to individuals and to crowds. These belong to different categories of living things, and their attitude to the infinite unknown must be different, because the kind of knowledge they have of it, or emotion toward it, is different. A crowd indeed cannot be religious in the same way as an individual. The union of the soul with God which the mystic desires and labours to arrive at by help of religious observance is not possible for any crowd. Even united worship does not carry to the Throne of Grace the crowd, but only the individuals composing it, though their emotions may be quickened by fellowship. Hence when crowds have attempted to make Christianity a crowd affair, identifying the nation with the religious body, it has been necessary for them to invent a representative worship, which in a general way may be compared with other representative institutions. Nations must have their worshipping done for them, and this can only be accomplished by an artificial convention. The mediæval Church provided priests, monks, and so forth to perform religious ceremonies on behalf of the crowd. That was one of the forms taken by social Christianity, against which of course individualistic Christianity revolted. Priesthoods, symbolical services, elaborate rituals and so forth — these all belong to socialistic representative religion and are necessarily contrary to the spirit and needs of personal religion: hence the anti-ritualism of the Evangelical Movement of the last century; hence on the contrary the ritualism of the socially religious

# The Crowd in Peace and War

Oxford Movement which followed as a reaction against it — examples of the endless see-saw between the primitive individualistic Christianity of Christ and the socialistic push to paganise it which no crowd of Christians can avoid.

To put the matter in briefest form, while all crowds are moral, none are religious. Even a church cannot be collectively religious. The history of the Churches proves this, as we have just shown. Governments, Churches, and other crowds have seized upon religion at certain stages of their history and availed or attempted to avail themselves of its sanctions to enforce their own laws and moralities. By this means morals, a social thing, and religion, a personal thing, have often been and still are confused together. It is not even correct to speak of Christian morals. Morals are the product of society, but Christianity was the revelation of Christ alone, and He certainly never confused morals with his law of love. Christ indeed upon some notable occasions defied the morals of his day. Right and wrong are not identical with moral and immoral, though how often we hear an immoral action spoken of as wrong. It may be wrong, or it may not be, but it is not wrong because it is immoral. All actions are immoral which are contrary to the emotions of the crowd that creates the morals in question. But an action which is immoral from the point of view of some crowd may be perfectly harmless or even meritorious from the point of view of a particular unit of the said crowd. Nevertheless if there is a religion conterminous with a given crowd, that religion will give to the crowd's morals the sanctions of "right" and "wrong," whilst if the crowd's government is

# Religion

identified with its religious organisation, the laws will tend more and more to be so shaped as to impose its morality by enactment. What a remarkable feat of governmental interference in the past generations it has been to impose on the public mind the idea that marriage ordinances, for example, correspond to some eternal law of right and wrong, and that to set them at defiance is necessarily to do a wicked action! To accomplish that result religion had first to appropriate a foreign area of morals, and then government had to usurp the authority of religion. If so-called Christian morals are in very truth a part of Christianity, it must follow that Christianity is merely the outcome of a crowd movement, not of a divine revelation.

It must not, however, be forgotten that in the evolution of a people the evolutions of its government, its morals, and the religions of its citizens are taking place simultaneously, and sometimes, though far from always, by equal stages. Where a harmony exists between all three, a happy state of things is arrived at; and such a harmony has characterised the culminations of some important epochs of civilisation. Thus in the great age of Chivalry and Feudalism the religion of the people matched very closely the moral and governmental ideals of the day. No one, however, would claim that the present age is marked by any such congruity. It is an age of rapid change alike in governmental and religious ideals, whilst much of our morality is obviously transitional. Under these conditions the individual is fortunately able to preserve a good deal of freedom, not only of thought but of speech. He may differ from one of the great crowds

# The Crowd in Peace and War

without offending all simultaneously. This is why it has recently come to pass in Great Britain that the law of marriage in the State differs from the law of marriage in some of the churches, whilst the attitude of public opinion towards marriage is somewhat undecided and does not heartily agree with that either of the State or of the churches. Obviously when State, church, and public opinion are all in hearty agreement together on such questions, the individual will be so powerfully controlled by the forces of all three bent in the same direction as to lose his freedom in the presence of the mighty crowd. How efficient in controlling individuals the alliance between government and religion has been was clearly demonstrated by the third article of the same Treaty of Verona already cited. It runs as follows:—

“Convinced that the principles of religion contribute most powerfully to keep nations in the state of passive obedience which they owe to their princes, the high contracting parties declare it to be their intention to sustain, in their respective States, those measures which the clergy may adopt, with the aim of ameliorating their own interests, so intimately connected with the preservation of the authority of Princes; and the contracting powers join in offering their thanks to the Pope for what he has already done for them, and solicit his constant co-operation in their views of submitting the nations.”

This was written barely a century ago; how strangely antiquated it seems to us! Yet even so recently as in the days of Ruskin's activity he could claim that “our National Religion is the performance of church ceremonies and



## Religion

“preaching of soporific truths (or untruths) to keep the “mob quietly at work while we amuse ourselves.” The emancipation of religion from crowd-control is the first essential for Christian religious life. The State, if it controls religious organisation or is controlled thereby, will and always must use the sanctions of religion to enforce the decisions of the State, or the power of the State to enforce the dogmas and promote the interests of the religion. Christianity, the Christianity of the Gospels, does not lend itself to such an office. The whole of Christianity is within the capacity of a child to grasp. All that crowds have ever added to it has been unchristian incomprehensibilities, incredible dogmas, and unnecessary ceremonials, invented solely for collective purposes.

## CHAPTER XV

### OVERCROWDS

**I**F independent crowds of a similar kind come in contact one with another, an instinctive mutual hostility arises, except when two or more crowds unite in hostility to a third or to another group of crowds. Similarly if one crowd divides into two independent sections, these sections will always be hostile to one another. This dangerous but fundamental characteristic of crowds is due to the fact that every crowd desires to expand indefinitely, and that the existence of a rival crowd obviously puts a limit on its expansion. No better instances of the mutual hostility of similar crowds can be cited than organised religious bodies afford, especially those calling themselves Christian. If they were truly Christian they would love one another, but being crowds they cannot, and therefore are not truly Christian. Every religious body conceives of itself as the depository of divine truth. Its undeniable aim, therefore, must be to expand and embrace the whole world, unless its religion is limited by race, like that of the Jews, or in some similar fashion. The great religious crowds all claim universality and must therefore be jealous of one another and in fact mutually hostile. This hostility is not due to their religion but to the fact that they are crowds and cannot help possessing the universal characteristic of crowds.

## Overcrowds

Observe how the great public schools dislike one another. It is a dormant emotion no doubt, but it exists. The Eton and Harrow cricket match, not so long ago, used to end with a scrimmage that would have developed into a free fight had there been no superior force to intervene. Oxford does not love Cambridge any better than Harrow loves Eton. Neighbouring towns do not regard one another with affection. I have heard an estimable mayor of Chatham state his honest opinion of the adjacent City of Rochester. It was not complimentary! Manchester does not love Liverpool, nor I believe does Boston adore New York. All nations tend to mutual hostility. England, Scotland, Wales, and Ireland get along together, but, if all their common interests as against the rest of the world could be put out of mind, their remaining emotion towards one another would be the reverse of affectionate. It is not necessary to labour this point, seeing that the fact is universally admitted and has been established by the experience of mankind in all ages.

When, however, an overcrowd is formed, which embraces and contains two or more subordinate crowds, the mutual hostility of these subordinate crowds remains dormant so long as they are conscious of their union in the overcrowd. If their union is brought about by the active hostility of the overcrowd to some other crowd or overcrowd, it will be all the more efficacious in suppressing internal jealousies and friction. Thus Kikuyu showed how rival Christian communities can unite in the presence of active heathendom, the only protestant against such friendly co-operation being a bishop who felt himself more strongly drawn to an imaginary "Catholic" overcrowd

# The Crowd in Peace and War

than to one composed of local Christian communities of different complexions. It was in fact a case where three overcrowds were in question, a "Catholic," a Protestant, and a heathen, the Protestant union being the result of conflict with the heathen, whilst the Catholic union arose from a different and unconnected ideal. The Protestant overcrowd consequently availed to absorb all the Christian bodies and individuals except those that were overwhelmed by the Catholic ideal. The mutual hostility between the Protestant and Catholic crowds was strong enough to prevent them from being united even by their common hostility to heathendom and Islam.

I am told that in the University of Toronto there exists or existed an informal alliance between the Romanist and the Methodist students as against the Baptists, and that this alliance manifests itself in the football field in matches between a joint team of those against a team of these. The effect of such co-operation must be to soften the otherwise strong opposition between Romanists and Methodists, who cannot fail to be thus induced to look on one another with less of crowd-prejudice in proportion to the strength that the overcrowd tie may develop. Is this a sign of that dangerous Americanism, so distasteful to the ultramontane authorities who have not been led into the temptations involved in playing football in a combined Roman-Wesleyan team against a common opponent?

Every great crowd, such as a nation, is built up out of a complex structure of subordinate crowds, and they of smaller social groups, and so on down to the component individuals. Subordinate crowds, in fact, are the limbs and organs of a great body politic. By uniting and sub-

## Overcrowds

ordinating them, limiting the area of operation of each, and preventing them from mutual conflict of an active kind, it enables them to co-operate to the good of the whole organism. Thus it comes to pass that an overcrowd is not hostile towards subordinate crowds so long as they are content to remain subordinate, but only if they endeavour to become conterminous with it and to supplant its organisation by their own. I think it was Mr. Mallock who described the social aggregate as a litter of beasts or groups, each having a consciousness of its own and interests of its own, which usually do not coincide with those of the rest, but are opposed to them. The overcrowd imposes upon these rival interests the limitations which enable the groups to live together in peace and even in happiness.

How does it accomplish this result? Partly by the material force given to it with the general consent of the public opinion of the overcrowd, but much more by the greater force usually possessed over the passions of individuals by the ideal of the greater crowd over the ideal of the component bodies. Oxford does not abstain from attacking Cambridge in force through fear of police and military, but because, for all their rivalry, Oxford and Cambridge are united by stronger common emotions and ideals than those that divide them. When they think only of each other it may be with disparagement, but as against the rest of the world they embrace each other with a mutual pride. Their members belong to a common class. They are inspired by each Alma Mater with similar standards; they start the life of men with a similar hallmark, besides belonging to a common country in the fash-

# The Crowd in Peace and War

ioning of whose destinies they look to take an important part. Thus the overcrowd mightily inspires them, and their small local hostility is a trifle set against the crowd-forming ideals they possess in common.

The same is likewise true, for example, with the people of the North and South of England, who have many divergencies in ideal and look towards one another with no small lack of sympathy in certain aspects. But, against the world, North and South are one — Englishmen all — notwithstanding their differences of blood — Norse, Angle, Saxon, Jute, Celt, Norman, and what-not. Though far from being wrought into a unity of blood by intermarriage, they are welded into one by the English ideal which all share alike. Thus also it is or should be with all the classes, groups, and crowd-subdivisions of all sorts within the body of a nation. No one need desire to obliterate or even weaken their diverse characters or to erase the lines that limit each from each. All that is needed is that, however subdivided, they should likewise be united above their subdivisions by the possession of a common passion, called patriotism, which if strong enough will suffice to make every smaller section innocuous to the nation as a whole.

What in fact is a Nation? It is not merely a number of individuals dwelling within a particular geographical area, nor a population talking a common language, nor is it to be defined by the possession of a common stock or blood-relationship. A nation is the whole population of an area, organised into a single crowd by the possession of a common ideal. It is patriotism that makes a nation, not vice versa. Thus Africanders will be a nation, if they

## Overcrowds

are not so already, when their feeling of unity overpowers and submerges their attachment to their component race-crowds. There is no reason even to desire an individual to forget whether he is of British or Dutch origin. That is an immaterial detail once the passion of the overcrowd is stronger than that of the section. When that has been brought about a nation exists; and the common ideal once created is liable to grow into that kind of passion which, as Mr. Tim Healy informed Mr. Winston Churchill, can be recognised when it shows itself to be "something that men willingly die for."

Patriotism is a very curious force and operates on individuals in all manner of unsuspected ways, so that the moment that feeling or prejudice can be invoked in favour of some object the tendency of the public will be to range themselves on its side. The reader will be refreshed by an absurd instance. I have before me the report of an action brought against the sellers of certain oysters which it was claimed were unfit for food. Counsel, to obtain the help of prejudice on his side, as against the oysters, emphatically asserted "that it was important that the "public should know that they were only imported oysters "and were not Natives"!

Leaving out of consideration for the moment the relation of patriotism to war, it may here be asserted that the supreme value of that emotion is not in provoking hostility or resisting the rivalry of other countries, but in its unifying, nation-making force. That man is virtuously patriotic whose emotion, shared with and drawn from the overcrowd, is much more powerful than the emotion shared with and drawn from any subordinate crowd.

## The Crowd in Peace and War

If a man loves his town, his church, his order, his class, or any other crowd to which he belongs, more than he loves his country, he lacks patriotism; he is a sectional traitor. He puts the part before the whole. He may love an individual more than he loves his country, for patriotism is a crowd-emotion only and is not concerned with individuals; but if he is more loyal to a sub-crowd than to the national overcrowd he is a traitor to the nation. Some traitors have been heroes and have had good personal reasons for their treason, but it has been treason none the less — a crowd-sin, which, if it is to be individually meritorious, must have sound intellectual reasons in its favour.

Where I now sit writing I have but to raise my eyes to see the Gateway beneath which Sir Thomas Wyatt, the rebel, bade farewell to his young wife and infant child when he rode away to put himself at the head of the Kentish Rebellion — the object of which was to prevent the hateful Spanish marriage of Queen Mary and Philip II. He was a traitor, but he was not therefore necessarily a wicked man. There have been traitors and traitors. It is, however, only under quite exceptional circumstances of revolution and the like that such complicated oppositions of ideals arise to puzzle the actions of men. In normal times a nation must be possessed throughout by the single patriotic ideal which subordinates all the minor crowds to the body politic. What Mr. Roosevelt said of republics is equally true of all nations, whatever their system of government: "No republic can permanently exist when it becomes a republic of classes, when the man feels not the interest of the whole people but the



## Overcrowds

"interest of the particular class to which he belongs, or "fancies that he belongs, as of prime importance." That is a particular case of a general law. A crowd is a being fashioned by an emotion. An overcrowd can only exist when the emotion that generates it is more powerful than the several emotions by which its subsidiary crowds are generated.

Failures of patriotism are not common with sub-crowds in our own day, but they occur sometimes in the case of modern socialistic bodies. Here is an instance which happened in Chicago Dec. 30, 1904. There had been a ghastly fire in the Iroquois theatre and numbers of people were killed and injured by the flames. About that time a strike had occurred among the livery-stable drivers. "An employer went to the strikers' headquarters, where "the men had congregated, and asked the men to go "to the Iroquois theatre to help to remove the injured. "The strikers flatly refused." Here the overcrowdship, not only of the nation but even of the human race, failed to operate against bitter sectional self-consciousness. When sub-crowds of such strength are formed their existence becomes a peril to the body politic. Aristocracies, churches, trade unions, and other crowds have at times been, like the heartless Chicago strikers, supremely mischievous.

Where a crowd is not contained within the limits of a nation but spreads abroad through the world, with different sections in different nations, another kind of conflict arises. A local subdivision of it will then be within the hypnotic area of two unco-ordinated overcrowds. Such is the condition of, for example, the English Roman Cath-

# The Crowd in Peace and War

olics: they are both part of England and part of the Roman Church. It is conceivable that a situation might arise when the interests of the two would be antagonistic, and a man would have to choose between his patriotism and his orthodoxy. He would have to become a traitor or a heretic! In either case he would be driven to commit a crowd-offence. Such antinomies are rare and cannot endure in a world where the very existence of civilisation depends on the co-ordination of crowds.

Another case of difficulty arises under modern conditions, when, owing to the movement of population, men are almost compelled to change their nationality as economic conditions drive them to change their home from one country to another. This entails the process called naturalisation. As a rule it is sound to assume that a man will quickly catch the patriotism of the country to which he removes, and that that of the country from which he comes will gradually fade away, at least from priority. An individual, fearing the crowd, is not likely to utter unpatriotic sentiments in presence of the public of his new home. He will be far more likely to err hypocritically in the other direction. Hence the ill-founded belief in most countries, and especially in new countries, that immigrants are far more rapidly absorbed into the new nationality than is in fact the case. In America it is common to hear it asserted that five years' residence will turn any foreigner into a good American. We in England used to nourish some such illusion about naturalised Germans. But now I read (since the great war began) a different story. Examples of absorption, "so far as they can be usefully "consulted, seem to show that the case varies to a

## Overcrowds

“perplexing degree. One man is thoroughly Anglicised “or Americanised, while another remains just as good a “German as though he had continued to live on German soil. Herr Chamberlain whose writings are so “dear to the Kaiser’s heart and so popular in Germany “was an Englishman, but appears to have been pretty “effectually Teutonised judging from his diatribes against “England.” Nevertheless Dr. Nicholas Murray Butler, President of Columbia University, New York, says that the United States have proved “that race antagonisms “tend to die away and disappear under the influence of “liberal and enlightened political institutions.” He speaks, however, without authority when he continues: “We “have huge Celtic, Latin, Teutonic, and Slavic populations “all living here at peace and in harmony; and, as years “pass, they tend to merge, creating new and homogeneous “types. The Old World antagonisms have become memories. This proves that such antagonisms are not mysterious attributes of geography or climate, but that they “are the outgrowth principally of social and political conditions. Here a man can do about what he likes, so long “as he does not violate the law; he may pray as he pleases “or not at all, and he may speak any language that he chooses.” Of course in normal times within the area of the American overcrowd such sub-crowds will have no occasion to come to blows, but until the United States have been at war with, say, Germany, is there a possibility of knowing whether the German-American is more German or more American?

There has been no considerable change in racial stocks in the United Kingdom since the Norman Conquest, yet

## The Crowd in Peace and War

our people are far from being merged into a homogeneous type, and that notwithstanding the fact that for some 700 years they were not impeded in racial mixing by the existence of a prolific printing-press. Now the press tends to keep alive racial sub-crowds. The Irish-Americans, the German-Americans, the Dago-Americans, the Slav-Americans, and so forth, have each their own press and will probably maintain their sub-crowdship much longer than would have been possible in illiterate days. Only a pathetic faith (in things as they essentially are not) can believe otherwise. Race patriotism has had a good deal more to do with the attitude of United States citizens toward the belligerents in the present great war than it would be politic for either party to acknowledge; and curiously enough we English would rather have the support of the people of our race on the other side of the ocean upon the solid ground of race-prejudice than because we are engaged in a just war!

In normal days in the United States, as much as but no more than in other civilised countries, national public opinion will be stronger than any sectional opinion, and the overcrowd will contain all sectional crowds in peace and harmony, or at least in enough of peace and harmony for all practical purposes. The upheaval of war is, however, the supreme test, and it has been applied to the British Empire with results that all the world can behold and understand. Here then is the value of patriotism. It is the unifying force, as precious in time of peace as in war-time, and most efficient under the great inquest of war if it has been long and beneficently operative throughout many peaceful generations.

## Overcrowds

In thus referring to empires and wars we have, however, outrun our subject, which has so far led us to consider nations. Empires and races present larger problems. To weld together into a single polity divers nations has been attempted again and again these two thousand years and more. The ancient way was to carry off a conquered population bodily from their home. The organisation of a national crowd thus treated was broken up; it tended to disintegrate into its units and those to recombine with other people in a new home. Charlemagne's translation of a large body of Saxons was about the last successful effort of this kind. In later days the effort has frequently been made to denationalise a conquered nation. Cromwell tried to denationalise the Irish and failed. Napoleon succeeded in deprovincialising the French, but denationalisation has never been successful. Only peoples and governments lacking in true political gift have even made the attempt in modern times. Germans and Russians have essayed to Germanise or Russify the Poles. The Finns have been similarly attacked. These and like efforts have quite failed.

Meanwhile the United States demonstrated the modern possibilities of federation. By the extraordinary ability and skill of statesmen trained in the Revolutionary War, the thirteen revolted colonies were at length welded voluntarily together into a federation, whereby they were enabled to preserve their individuality and yet to form what proved to be the nucleus of a strong imperial state. That lesson was not lost upon Great Britain, which slowly learnt by repeated experiment that the way to attach sec-

# The Crowd in Peace and War

tional states to a larger overcrowd is for the including body to make it plain that its first duty shall be to preserve the inviolability of the local independence of the included states. The wisdom of this policy has become so apparent that at last, and not fully till quite recently, the fundamental principle of empire may be said to have been established, namely that the basis of empire is the guaranteed preservation of the local freedom of each included nation, the unshattered crowdship of each sectional component crowd.

This is the vital principle which has enabled the British Empire to hold together in the present time of trial. It is by at least a recognition of it that Russia was led to proclaim the future unity and subordinate independence of Poland. It is becoming clearer that only by the application of this principle can the Balkan problem be solved. Thus the principle of Home Rule for Nations is at length emerging as the true foundation of empires, and there can be little doubt that, in the world-epoch now beginning, that will be one of the chief structural principles of the organisation of mankind. It enlists on the side of the central organisation the strongest of all crowd-instincts — that of self-preservation. Who shall say how far the integration of nations into world-states may go on this basis; even perhaps at long last into the ultimate formation of a world-embracing overcrowd.

Another kind of overcrowd, differing from an empire in that it is altogether lacking in crowd-organisation, is the Race. We speak freely of the races of mankind; we recognise that race is an important element in human structure and relations, yet no one could delimit existing

## Overcrowds

racés or even accurately define them. It is indeed generally assumed that a race is mainly to be defined by the possession of a common blood. We hear the Jews called a pure race. Since about the fifth century of our era the Jews may not have intermarried with other peoples, except in the case of those who ceased to be Jews; but before that time there was no such isolation. In the Roman Empire the Jews freely accepted adhesions from without. Where are all the Phœnicians and other Semites who were scattered over the ancient world? Probably many of them were merged into the Jewish body. You may see in England to-day men with heads that absolutely repeat the type of the Assyrian man-headed bulls. Moreover it is only necessary to compare the Russian, Hungarian, Spanish, Levantine, and North European Jews to be convinced that they form together a race no more "pure" than, for example, the English race. As for that we know its history. No one can pretend that it is anything but a mixture in which very numerous varieties of blood are united but not blended. As a matter of fact intermarriage does not blend. After a thousand years of intermarrying, Saxon, Celt, and Iberian are not blended.

Race, in fact, is nothing but a convenient term for a kind of overcrowd, possessing in common a more or less definite group of ideals. Within the Slav, the German, the Latin, the English-speaking races, there is an indefinite mixture of different stocks, but each of these overcrowds possesses by historical descent a certain ideal, and all these ideals differ from one another. Race is not always the word for a multitude of people who inherit a common stock of blood, but rather for a multitude inherit-

# The Crowd in Peace and War

ing a common stock of traditions, a common outlook on life up to a certain point. Unity of ultimate governmental authority makes an Empire; but a race recognises no such link. An Empire must be more or less organic: a race is not organic at all. A race exists solely by the inheritance of ideals. Time alone can fashion one. It cannot be made suddenly by economic forces, nor by geographical propinquity, nor by the genesis of a new religion. By nothing but long historical sequence can a race be created. It is the outcome of crowd-memory alone and possesses therefore the pride, the moral force, and the momentum which belong to all the fine old things.

If ever humanity as a whole is to become an organic over-crowd it will not be by the junction of races but of Empires. Empires grow; races only endure. Empires look to the future; races to the past. Empires act; races remember. Nations "slowly wise" gradually assemble themselves together as needs, usually in the form of wars, compel. What has formed the British Empire? Primarily the opposition of other powers. The loyalty of Canada was born from fear of the United States. The German peril has been a vivifying force in recent decades. The great war is increasing our internal cohesion. If ever the British Empire becomes strongly organised it will be thanks to Germany; just as German internal unity arose from fear of France. No such forces act upon races. They do not grow into Empires; they emerge from them.

The greatness of an Empire depends upon its power, its numbers, its prosperity — not so the greatness of a race. That depends on its history and its ideals. The



## Overcrowds

prosperity of a race does not depend on its greatness; it depends upon the chance whether its gifts and ideals match a given day. No one will deny to the Spanish race the honours of greatness; but these are not its great days because its ideals do not match the present day. The same may be said of the Chinese. With races as with animals, their prosperity depends on their adaptation to their environment—not merely their physical environment, but their moral environment; whether their ideals are in general harmony with those best adapted to succeed at a particular time. The bold Spanish adventurer was of all men best equipped to be a *conquistador*. That type of man has little opportunity for the display of his qualities to-day. Western Europe has not always been ahead of the rest of the world. Its folk were barbarians when Greece gave civilisation to the Mediterranean area. In the thirteenth century Venetian Marco Polo marvelled at the greater prosperity and capacity of China compared with Western Europe. Western Europe and America have really only come right to the front along with science. When the age of science passes, as some day it may, the white race may probably enough sink below the first rank, and who knows what now obscure group will arise to replace it? Ere then perhaps the federation of the world will have been effected.

Professor Karl Pearson claims that a nation, properly organised for the struggle for existence among competing nations, "must be a homogenous whole, not a mixture of superior and inferior races." Such a mixture, however, is what all nations are, and, as it seems to me, must everlastingly remain. Every individual, every class, may

# The Crowd in Peace and War

have equal political rights with every other, but that does not affect the essential and enduring superiority and inferiority of racial layers within a nation. On the contrary, it may be argued that the very success of a nation in the world's struggle may be forwarded by its composition out of such successive layers of differently gifted races, each better adapted than the rest to some particular branch of those complicated human activities which go to make up the life of a modern nation. May it not be the case that what is properly called the caste system is the result of the action of natural laws and is therefore an essential factor, whether realised or not, in the structure of a modern nation?

In America the term "caste" is misapplied in popular usage, where it is supposed to be equivalent to the artificial ordering of social ranks. Castes are racial layers within a people, especially when those layers correspond to occupations. Thus if all Jews were financiers and all financiers Jews they would be a caste; there is a tendency for a certain group of Jews to become such in most civilised and progressive countries. India is the historic land in which the caste system is most easily studied because there openly acknowledged, and also because in some parts of India it is enforced by social sanctions. In the modern world we can see the caste system taking visible form more clearly in the United States than in any other country, because there the influx of immigrants of many different races has been so voluminous during recent times. The tendency is for different trades or occupations to fall into the hands of groups of persons of different nationalities respectively,

## Overcrowds

and this by the operation of purely economic and social forces. Bootblacks are generally Dagoes. Navvies are likely to be Hungarians. Masons are frequently North Italians — and so forth. Time does not tend to obliterate but to accentuate such divergencies of function; modern labour organisations tend in the same direction. Men of a common origin and race act together and organise themselves more potently than do men of diverse origin. The freer the political institutions of a country, therefore, the more easy is it for caste to arise, in fact if not in name. Nor does the obliteration of the memory of their origin make much difference. Adaptability to given types of labour is as much hereditary as any other gift, and will act without the help of nomenclature.

The strength of great Britain is largely due to the astonishing mixture of races contained within these islands, and to the fact that so many of them came in by conquest. The earliest stock of which we have vague knowledge was that which inhabited the country in Neolithic days. It was doubtless already very mixed. On to that came conquering raiders of the Celtic race in successive waves: Goidelic, Brythonic, and perhaps others. Belgic invaders added their contingent in South and East. Next followed the Romans; then the various Teutonic tribes, Jutes, Angles, and Saxons; after them Scandinavians of sorts; last of all Normans. With them the conquering aristocracies ended. Each in its turn had added a layer to the population, and each, by conquest, had demonstrated the possession of some superior quality to that of those it overcame. The era of physical conquest was not, however, the end of all accretions. A

## The Crowd in Peace and War

country capable of defending itself may still import folk, either of inferior gifts suited to perform rough labour, or of special talents enabling them by aid of economic fitting to establish themselves at a higher level. Such were the Flemish weavers; such again the industrious and able Jews, who added a new and most valuable factor to the complex races already settled and mutually adapted. The whole of this complex forms a union of inferior and superior races, some gifted with powers of administration, some with powers of manual skill, some merely with an almost blind physical strength. You have only to look at a miscellaneous assemblage of Englishmen to become aware of the wide divergence of racial types of which they are composed. The Neolithic Englishman is still discoverable, the red Celt also, and the fair-haired Norseman, the highbred Norman too, the sturdy Fleming, the Huguenot, and all the different races that compose the Jews — they are as identifiable as if they had been newly brought together from as many different lands. They are a mixture of inferior and superior races, and inter-marriage does not racially blend them. Children revert to the different ancestral types and perpetuate their various abilities and disabilities. Thus it must be, always and everywhere, in spite of all social ordinances and constitutional impediments intended to put everybody on a level.

Notwithstanding such racial divergence the whole mass forms a nation, and it does so not by uniformity of blood or even of language, but by the possession of a common national emotion, a common patriotism, a single crowd-constructive ideal. It is this that so obviously divides

## Overcrowds

the English Jew from the German Jew and often makes the former just as much an Englishman as the purest descendant of Anglian forefathers. It is this that unites and animates the whole body politic, that swamps the individual, happily, willingly, and completely, in the great crowd. By such results is crowd-formation justified. It creates out of a vast multitude of units of varying gifts, capacities, and values, an integral whole, a living organism, wherein as in any other animal some parts are made for honour and some for dishonour. We are all members of one body, depending on each other, not for equal gifts but for dissimilar gifts, and it is in the due and free subordination of the lower to the higher and the due and free functioning of all the parts that the health of the whole consists.

I have used the words inferior and superior as applied to layers of the population of any country, not however intending thereby to postulate a permanent relation between them, but merely as describing their relation at a given moment in respect of their several adaptabilities to the conditions of a particular day. Thus it will be obvious that at one time the possession of greater physical strength will give to a race a superiority over a less sturdy folk which they may lose whenever physical strength becomes unimportant as compared, for example, with ingenuity. A particular race may be gifted with powers of government and administration, adapted to one stage of civilisation but not to another; and many more such variations of aptness, due to changes in economic or military conditions, will occur to every reader. It follows that, within a nation, the relative positions of racial levels may change

# The Crowd in Peace and War

from time to time. The conquered of one age may become the economic conquerors of another, and so forth. Hence that nation will have the securest future which possesses within it the largest racial variety, each racial layer being regarded not merely as possessing the gifts which it best exercises for its own and the common good at any given time, but possibly also possessing latent powers which at another stage of civilisation may prove to be invaluable and may raise it, within the community, to a social level higher than it was suited to occupy before.

Allusion has already more than once been made to the fact that a crowd has only a limited, not an indefinitely prolonged, lifetime. It has, like any other animal, beginning, middle, and end. Thus the rise and fall of nations is a commonplace of history. Where are the Babylonians, the Ancient Egyptians, the Minoans, the Hittites, the Assyrians, and all the rest? Where is the Empire of Alexander, where the greater Empire of Rome? They all began with a day of small things, waxed to a maximum of strength, and each came ultimately to its end. It does not follow that a nation is the same because it occupies the same area and consists largely of the descendants of another that went before it. The Italian nation is not a continuation of the Roman, but a new crowd, welded into a unity by a new ideal. The modern German crowd is not a continuation of mediæval or even Renaissance Germany; it is a new crowd, a quite youthful nation, vigorous with a new life, shaped by an organisation of novel spirit, and tending towards a goal altogether different from any that previous German crowds tried to attain. The English nation is old be-

## Overcrowds

cause its ideal is old, it is instinct with an old patriotism, it follows after the general aims of its forefathers, but it is no older than the Norman Conquest, when Saxon England and all that it stood for came utterly to an end.

Waxing nations and waning nations must always exist side by side. In former days the one conquered the other. That is now less easy owing to international impediments and the existence of international over-crowds. Yet nations still must die. Their ideals must pass away, and be replaced by new ones, which will fashion the multitude of individuals living within a given geographical area into a new kind of crowd, which will in fact be a new nation. Immigration has remade Argentina. Immigration is likely before long to remake Brazil. The births and deaths of nations do not depend wholly on wars and conquests; they can happen and assuredly will happen without their aid and despite their impediment.

It does not follow that the individuals in a waxing nation are of better human material than those in one that is waning. Spain cannot now be called a waxing nation, yet where will you find a better set of individuals than the splendid Spanish peasantry? You could match them man for man against as many individuals of almost any other nation, and they would not yield the palm of human worth. It is not the Spanish individual that is lacking in value to-day, but the Spanish crowd-forming ideal. A nation fails when its ideal is worn out. Humanity in its evolution makes use of a succession of ideals. Each belongs to its day and its place. Each fashions the people it animates into a body politic, capable of existing in power and health as long as the ideal is alive. Thus

## The Crowd in Peace and War

the Greeks, the Romans, the Franks, the folk of Islam, the Turks, and all the rest, world-scattered, time-scattered, have followed each their ideal, like a pillar of fire, as long as the light shone before them in the darkness of surrounding fate. When the light failed they lost their respective ways, or took to following "wandering fires" and so came to grief, each by their special tragedy. But each in its day led the whole race of man onward while it was in the van, and, as each failed and dropped behind, another was ready to come forward and take its place.

Thus all the formative ideals that have shaped men into nations and other crowds have served the increasing purpose of all mankind. They have ceased one after another to be crowd-constructing powers, but they have remained in the individual a portion of his separate inheritance, so that to-day, and here in England, the ideal of mighty repose which fashioned an Empire on the banks of the Nile, the ideal of strength which made the Assyrian, the ideal of balance which formed the Greek, the ideal of legal order which inspired the Roman, may still animate the heart of an individual Englishman though none of these ideals is any longer exclusive in fashioning a Nation or an Empire.



## CHAPTER XVI

### WAR: ITS CAUSE AND CURE

CROWDS may be of two kinds: similar and dissimilar. Similar crowds are those in which membership of one excludes from membership of the rest. Thus a man cannot be both an Englishman and a Frenchman at one time. Nations therefore are similar crowds. A man cannot be at once a member of the liberal and conservative parties. He cannot be a Roman Catholic and likewise a Wesleyan. A boy cannot be at Eton and Harrow together. An undergraduate cannot belong to both Oxford and Cambridge at once. These are all examples of sets of similar crowds. But the same individual can be an Etonian, a Cambridge man, a barrister, a member of the Leander boat-club, a liberal, a Londoner, and an Englishman. Thus crowds to which a single individual can belong simultaneously are dissimilar crowds.

We can now state the axiom on which the remarks that follow will be founded: All similar independent crowds are mutually hostile. Independent crowds, as their name implies, are those that are not united together by any common overcrowd, nor subordinated to one. Similar subordinate crowds may be and generally are jealous of one another and would be actively hostile but for the harmonising restraint of their overcrowd. Such independent crowds as nations, or as the great international

# The Crowd in Peace and War

religious bodies, are independent crowds, and consequently they are instinctively hostile to one another, with a hostility either latent or patent.

In what follows it is with nations only that we shall be concerned, and we start with them from a special form of the above axiom: All independent nations are mutually hostile to one another. In times called times of peace this hostility is latent. Its existence seemed so obvious to the ancient Romans that their word for a foreigner was *hostis*, an enemy. That was their definition of a foreigner — a person towards whom a Roman was hostile. Of course hostility may be of many degrees, from the merest latent distaste up to the bitterest active combat for life and death. Individuals nowadays may be far enough advanced in true civilisation to feel no hostility to any foreign independent nation, but the crowd is not. The normal man uttering the crowd-emotion is invariably more or less hostile to every foreign independent nation.

Leaving out of account all nations and states which have combined into overcrowds or empires, the independent crowds great and small not so combined include the whole mass of living humanity. There exists no single individual who does not belong to one or other of these independent crowds, nor can one of them add one new citizen to its body by accretion from without except at the expense of one of its rivals. Further, practically all the valuable land-surface of the globe, except the archipelago of Spitsbergen, belongs to one or other of these independent national or imperial units, and none of them can add to its holding except at the expense of some other.

## War: Its Cause and Cure

Seeing that all crowds possess the instinct of expansion and that any one if unresisted and unsplit would expand to include the whole population of the earth and to own all its land-surface, it follows that the possession of this instinct makes each of the great crowds a menace to all the others. All alike, therefore, are quickened in their hostility to the rest by the instinct of self-preservation. So long as there were unabsorbed populations and lands, it was possible for the growing national crowds to increase at the expense of the unabsorbed, and to obtain possession of new populations and lands without depriving rivals of their folk or possessions. That is no longer possible. Existing nations are like so many bladders, large and small, filled with gas, and all squeezed together within a box which they unite to fill. If one of these bladders is to expand another must contract. There is no other way.

The primitive communities of remote antiquity (so far as we are informed about them), like the savage tribes of Africa a century ago, lived in a permanent state of warfare with one another. If they were not always actually fighting, it was because they lacked the leisure. As soon as a tribe could spare the time it attacked some neighbouring tribe and endeavoured to destroy or engulf it. The fact that the land was but sparsely peopled, and that there were great vacant spaces as well as efficient natural obstacles, like mountain ranges, impassable forests, swamps, seas, and so forth, put considerable impediments in the way of this universal tendency of separate crowds to fight. The tendency, however, was there, and the same tendency still exists. If all the nations of the earth are not always fighting, it is not because they don't want

# The Crowd in Peace and War

to, but because they have other things to do, and also because they are restrained by the action of contrary forces. If every crowd desires unlimited expansion, all other similar crowds are interested to prevent the expansion of any one. Hence each national crowd is operated on by two forces, an internal expansive force and an external resistance. When these are in equilibrium there is peace. The organisation of this resistance has steadily increased in efficiency with the growth of civilisation, and intervals of equilibrium have become longer, in which what is called the "balance of power" has existed. The balance of power is to independent nations what equality before the law is to individuals — the guarantee of national as of individual independence. Unfortunately this equilibrium is unstable, and can only be maintained by ceaseless attention, like the equilibrium of an inverted pyramid of acrobats. A state of war, therefore, is the natural condition of independent crowds, and would be their normal state but for the impediments placed in their way and continually renewed. It is not the cause of war that requires to be sought, but the cause of peace.

Though, however, all crowds are warlike, that is not true of individuals, if we leave out of account all kinds of crowd-representatives, who incarnate crowds, are moved by their emotions, and behave like them. In nothing is the interest of the individual more opposed to the tendency of a crowd than in this matter of war. We must go back to a time earlier than that of tribal formation to find the hand of every independent head of a family turned against his fellow. Rudimentary crowd-formation at once enlisted the interest of the individual

## War: Its Cause and Cure

on the side of peace. Thus if crowds are the source of international hostility they are likewise the origin of domestic peace. In war the rights of individuals disappear, and every individual suffers more or less. The results of war may be such that some individuals thereafter prosper, and even during war the economic interests of a few may be forwarded, but in the main the individual members of warring crowds all suffer more or less, so that every individual who keeps himself free of crowd-passion is almost certain to be on the side of peace and against war.

This is the second great restraining force — the impeding action of individuals against crowd-passion. I do not refer to their action as a peace-crowd. Individuals may work to form a peace-crowd and may have some success in time of profound peace; but when the national crowd makes for war, it swallows up or renders insignificant and ineffectual all contained crowds of whatever sort. No peace-crowd within a nation has ever yet availed to stop war when there was any real danger of it. Our own experience in the Crimean and South African wars suffices to illustrate that statement. Independent individuals, however, not formed into any kind of crowd, but retaining their individuality, with all its advantages of intelligence, foresight, guile, and personal initiative, can and often do have a considerable effect upon a crowd, either in helping or in hindering the formation within it of a given kind of opinion. An examination of the means and limitations of this kind of individual activity would lead us into too much detail. Suffice it here to point out that individuals going about their business, pushing their pri-

# The Crowd in Peace and War

vate enterprises, maintaining personal and intimate relations with other individuals in foreign and potentially enemy countries, do have a great cumulative effect upon their crowds, and this effect is mainly a force on the side of peace.

It is often asserted that democratically governed countries are less prone to war than others. This is a pure superstition without an atom of fact to rest on. All crowds alike tend to mutual hostility, and the hostility proceeds not from the leaders but from the crowd itself. Leaders may fan the passion to some extent, or restrain it, but they have no need to provoke it. The crowd generates a hostile passion towards a rival as spontaneously as yeast generates fermentation. A democracy when it sets warwards is every bit as dangerous as a tyranny. In both the emotion of the crowd is the moving force. The despot does not supply the strength of his people; he merely wields it. The power that makes war and wins victories is the passion of a people. However constructed internally, every national crowd alike is liable to the war-passion, which is always latent within it. Democracy possesses no special virtue of restraint. Witness the Spanish-American war, a purely democratic upheaval brought about by the crowd itself, in spite of all that its official leaders did to restrain it. Gusts of passion are the most frequent cause of actual war, and it is to these, coming on suddenly and with uncontrollable force, that democracies are especially liable.

Waxing and waning nations imperil the stability of international equilibrium or the balance of power. Those nations are most imperilled which are in closest contact

## War: Its Cause and Cure

or rivalry with such a neighbour. When a crowd, previously weak or insignificant, becomes impregnated with some new and efficient crowd-forming ideal and begins to grow with rapidity, the danger for its neighbours is necessarily great. This is not only true of nations. The growth of Labour, in organisation, self-consciousness, and consequently in size and power, upsets the internal domestic balance of forces and threatens to derange the social equilibrium of some modern states, a consideration which we cannot here pursue. A waxing crowd of necessity presses on its rivals, and that pressure cannot fail to raise the internal temperature of those affected, thereby intensifying their mutual latent hostility, and still more unfavourably affecting the unstable equilibrium of national crowds. Thereupon arises a fever of diplomatic activity the purpose of which is the readjustment of the equilibrium by co-ordination of exterior forces to meet and resist the increased pressure surrounding the growing body. In any such period the consciousness, in every affected national crowd, of its latent hostility to the crowd or crowds, whose expanding force threatens its integrity, becomes increasingly pronounced, and the difficulty of maintaining equilibrium is correspondingly increased, till at length it is no longer able to be maintained and war breaks out. Thereupon crowd-emotions explode; the voice of the individual is silenced and only those can be heard who trumpet for one or another of the competing crowds.

A waning nation is likewise a great danger to the peace of the world, and for a corresponding reason. To return to our simile of the gas-bags: if one of them shrinks

# The Crowd in Peace and War

others must expand, and all those that are pressing upon the shrinker will tend to grow and fill the forming gap. The competition in expansion thus engendered produces conditions similar to those just described, and similar dangers arise, as every reader can picture for himself.

The *ultima ratio* of war, therefore, is the existence of independent national crowds, that is to say national crowds not united by alliance under any kind of overcrowd. So long as they exist wars must occur. It is their independence of an overcrowd which deprives their necessary mutual hostilities of a sufficiently powerful counterbalancing emotion. In other words, "war is "the only form of law-suit by which the claims of independent States can be asserted." The common emotion whereby the existence of an overcrowd induces peace between subordinate crowds, or enforces it upon them, does not exist in independent crowds. If they choose to attack one another there is no power capable of preventing them. It is ultimately only force that preserves peace between similar crowds, and that kind of force cannot be provided except by an overcrowd.

Even an overcrowd is not always strong enough to keep its subordinate crowds at peace. When it fails to do so the result is what we call Revolution or Civil War. This occurs oftenest in consequence of the rapid growth of some new crowd. Thus if the Labour crowd were to grow very much more rapidly and strongly than it has grown of late, so that its ideals came to possess the labouring class with a force much stronger than that with which they were possessed by the patriotic national sense,



## War: Its Cause and Cure

Labour would no longer be a crowd subordinate to the nation but one in competition with it. Contest would then become inevitable and one crowd would have to overcome the other as the result of combat, physical or moral, or both.

It may be objected that, in this case, as in that of the opposition of national crowds, sufficient allowance has not been made for the controlling influence and the ambition of leaders. When a party clamours for revolution it desires to substitute for the ideal and the leaders of the existing nation its own ideal and its own leaders who incorporate and express it. It may easily be assumed, perhaps too easily, that the leaders of parties out of power, who desire to alter the ideal of a nation by the substitution for it of their own, are liable to be more actuated by personal ambition to occupy high place than for the triumph and power of the ideal it is their business to express. Certainly all agitators for change, who are or aspire to be leaders, are to be regarded as suspect. The change they advocate would in any case be to their personal advantage. But the crowd at whose head they stand, even if it be a labour-crowd calling for higher wages and better conditions of life, cannot be similarly indicted. Unless the ideals of a crowd are quickened, unless its aspirations and sympathies are raised above the level of mere self-seeking, it will not be a crowd of much volume or force. It is only ideals, containing at least some fine elements, that hotly inspire mankind. They may be mistaken ideals; their results may be disastrous; they may be imperfect and mixed with evil elements; but it is the fine part that is vital, that spreads, that attracts and

## The Crowd in Peace and War

is effective. Those leaders, broadly speaking, come to the top who, even if ambitious and infected with the leaven of self-seeking, are in the main inspired, probably passionately inspired, with whatever is fine and vital in the faith by which their crowd is quickened, and who honestly believe themselves especially adapted to give effect to it.

Were it not for the existence of independent crowds, or crowds striving for independence, war would not spontaneously arise, and could not be brought about by individuals, however ambitious. If Napoleon had not had the French crowd ready to his hand, wrought to the condition to which the Revolution had brought it, he would not have become the portent of an age. William II could not have launched the present war if the German crowd had not been slowly fashioned to desire it, partly in consequence of its own sudden growth, and partly by the spread of the ideals which took form simultaneously and to a large degree because of that growth. It was because the crowd-forces of the world were shaping themselves toward this inevitable contest that those who were nearest the heart of them, and therefore most conscious of their nature, were led to make the long and careful war-preparations for which they have been blamed by the short-sighted leaders of other nations. There come times in the history of a world, filled with independent similar crowds, when they cannot be restrained from falling upon one another, by any existing force. If peace is to be imposed upon them, it can only be by the creation of a new force. No force will be strong enough to accomplish this constraint except a new overmastering ideal, resi-

## War: Its Cause and Cure

dent in an overcrowd of larger dimensions than any that has existed in the world up to now.

Where, by conquest or alliance, crowds previously independent have formed an overcrowd, peace has resulted between the component parts. The Pax Romana was created by the Imperial overcrowd, and other great overcrowds at different times have caused large areas of peace to form in the stormy ocean of human history. Our own relation to France and Russia proves the power of overcrowdship to generate goodwill and dissipate the instinctive hostility of peoples. I remember to have been inordinately impressed, when a lad, by hearing an old gentleman, of rather beneficent and kindly nature, cheerfully and à propos of nothing give vent to the exclamation, "Damn all Frenchmen, say I!" It would be hard indeed to find a Briton animated by that emotion since the conclusion of the *Entente*, which called the Anglo-French overcrowd into existence. A similar change has taken place in the attitude of the English crowd toward Russia. A few hard-shell Nonconformists or doctrinaire socialists may retain the passion they absorbed in anti-Russian days from the foolish Crimean War down; but they do not count; they are now only individuals with peculiar personal views and with no crowd-following of any importance. The national crowd has got well rid of the emotion that lingers on in them. So too, since the war, public opinion has changed in relation to Servia, now admired as a people of heroic nature. Thus it is also with our other allies. The alliance has created an overcrowd, not merely by the fortune of war and the agreements of diplomatists but

# The Crowd in Peace and War

by the inspiration of a common and powerful emotion shared by all alike.

The masterful effect of overcrowdship in creating a common ideal throughout two previously hostile crowds was well expressed by M. Léon Bourgeois in a speech made on 1 May, 1915, and thus briefly reported in a Reuter dispatch. He said that there was arising in each of the allied states what he called "an interior alliance," which, putting an end to internal friction, brought about the triumph of a higher feeling — the solidarity necessary to all true spirits and generous hearts. The common soul was emerging little by little, and becoming the mirror of every soul. He continued: —

"This common soul must survive the terrible crisis in which it became conscious of itself. It must continue to animate humanity with its all-powerful breath. Let us know how to express our will, and, beneath a sky no longer threatened by storm, in a Europe in which peace has been re-established, and by that we mean a real peace resulting from the final victory of the forces of civilisation over those of barbarism, the man of to-morrow will be able freely to develop himself in the complete liberty of his opinions and beliefs, in the assured respect of his rights and in the fulfilment of all his duties. Some time before the outbreak of this awful war, it seemed as if the Promised Land was very far from us. To-day, even amid the worst sufferings, do you not think that we have come nearer to that land?"

So long as a common crowd-compelling emotion binds into one any number of otherwise independent crowds, war will not arise between them; and this is the only force

## War: Its Cause and Cure

by which war can be banished. If the whole world were to be thus united into a single overcrowd, war would cease, so long as that union of crowds lasted; and that would be so long and so long only as a single ideal animated in common a number of previously independent crowds, large enough to impose it upon all the rest, if necessary by overwhelming force. Armageddon will be the last battle between the last two overcrowds into which the world will some day consolidate, and that battle is still doubtless far away in the depths of the future. When it has been fought the ideal of the victors will be called "good," that of the vanquished "evil," or in the language of the first prophet that foretold it, it will be a battle between Christ and Antichrist. After it there will be peace on earth so long as the overcrowd endures.

The normal process by which international overcrowds are formed is the process of agglomeration, the addition of crowd to crowd, either by conquest or by federation, or by voluntary alliance, usually for purposes of defence against some other threatening crowd or overcrowd. Conquest followed by absorption is the old-world method. Conquest followed by compulsory alliance is the method tried not without some success by Germany in the case of Austria. Germany also tried to force England into her alliance, as Dr. Bethmann-Hollweg openly confessed. The Triple Entente is an example of alliance for defence against a waxing crowd. But there are signs of another possible method of overcrowd formation which may "threaten the independence of nations" — that dire disease — in a future perhaps not so distant as might be thought. This is by the formation of an international

# The Crowd in Peace and War

crowd which shall honeycomb all the nations and wholly include none of them, its aim being to grow so strong, with an independent life of its own, as ultimately to dominate all independent national crowds and overcrowds and substitute itself for and over them all. It has been attempted for nearly two thousand years to form a world overcrowd around an ideal of righteousness. The attempt has failed. Righteousness may exalt a nation but has never formed one. Righteousness in fact, like peace, is not a creative but a consequential ideal. Internal peace follows but does not cause the formation of an overcrowd, and so too righteousness arises in an organised and healthy society but does not, as an ideal to be attained, cause the formation of such a society on any world-embracing scale; and that notwithstanding that it has been preached and propagated by enthusiastic generations of excellent men, sacrificing their lives in the endeavour to extend it throughout the world. Similarly the possession of a common humanity has not amounted to very much as an international crowd-compelling force. The "enthusiasm of "humanity" has ever been but the passion of the elect. The great mass of mankind does not feel it, and will not feel it till humanity has been welded into an overcrowd by some more potent force. That enthusiasm also would appear to be consequential rather than creative. If humanity — the whole race of man — could be threatened by the inhabitants of some other planet about to invade the Earth, humanity would group itself into a single organised crowd fast enough, having a common independent exterior crowd to hate and fear; but as no such object of common hostility is as yet apparent, humanity is not

# War: Its Cause and Cure

now affected by any common emotion powerful enough to weld it into a crowd able to absorb nations and subordinate their several patriotisms.

Some wild persons have thought that to obliterate patriotism would cause the emotion of our common humanity to take its place. Such an one is M. Gustave Hervé who said:—

“We are Anti-Patriot Internationalists, and have in no degree a love for the Mother Country. Hence we do not know what national honour is. The political superiority of the French Government over the German is so slight, on account of the similitude of the economic and social organisation of the two countries, that it is a matter of indifference to us whether we are French or German. We have thus decided to answer an order of mobilisation by a general strike of reservists at first, and then finally by insurrection. As for the defence of our Mother Country we will give neither one drop of blood, nor one square centimetre of skin.”

Such purely negative anti-nationalism is of course the merest moonshine. The super-nationalism of the distant future will not destroy nations but tend to combine them, cherishing the individuality of each, and not weakening patriotism but rather strengthening and enforcing it.

“The man,” says Professor Karl Pearson,<sup>1</sup> “who tells us that he feels to all men alike, that he has no sense of kinship, that he has no patriotic sentiment, that he loves the Kafir as he loves his brother, is probably deceiving himself. If he is not, then all we can say is that a nation

<sup>1</sup> “National Life,” p. 50.

# The Crowd in Peace and War

“of such men, or even a nation with a large minority of such men, will not stand for many generations; it cannot survive in the struggle of the nations; it cannot be a factor in the contest upon which human progress ultimately depends. The national spirit is not a thing to be ashamed of, as the educated man seems occasionally to hold. If that spirit be the mere excrescence of the music-hall, or an ignorant assertion of superiority to the foreigner, it may be ridiculous, it may even be nationally dangerous; but if the national spirit takes the form of a strong feeling of the importance of organising the nation as a whole, of making its social and economic conditions such that it is able to do its work in the world and meet its fellows without hesitation in the field and in the market, then it seems to me a wholly good spirit — indeed one of the highest forms of social, that is, moral instinct. So far from our having too much of this spirit of patriotism, I doubt if we have anything like enough of it.”

Any movement which proposes to unite nations into an overcrowd, without destroying their individuality, but only by limiting their independence through the superposition of some higher common ideal, is obviously one likely to be beneficial to mankind; but a movement which proposes to sap the individual vitality of nations is to be regarded with suspicion. The Mediæval Church thus threatened what has proved to be the line of development which the people of Europe, being what they were, could alone follow. When social Christianity began to take shape in the early Christian centuries it formed what at first was a subordinate crowd rendering to Cæsar the



## War: Its Cause and Cure

things that were Cæsar's. When it waxed strong and became the established religion of the Empire, in theory Christendom and the Empire became one — two aspects of a single crowd. Later, when the Empire vanished and independent states arose out of its ruins, the Church became an overcrowd, but not strong enough to hold the nations together as against a common foe, when the integrity of Europe was assailed by Islam. The Church overcrowd was strongest in Carlovingian days and even then only moderately efficient. It never kept rivals at peace as the common Anglo-American ideals have kept the peace between the British and American Empires for the last hundred years, in spite of all kinds of jealousies and conflicting interests. The Roman Church, before the Middle Ages were over, lost the small efficiency as an overcrowd which it had ever possessed, and the Reformation with its *cujus regio ejus religio* put an end even to its claim to be such. From that time the Roman Church, like any other religious body, has been international but not supernatural, nor does any unbiased person expect that it will become supernatural again at any future date, at all events not in its present shape.

There is, however, at the present time a new international movement taking place, the nature and prospects of which cannot yet be defined. Sometimes it looks as though it were the manifestation of the incipient growth of a new religion, destined, like Christianity in the past, to embody all that was best in those that had preceded it. Should that prove to be the fact it will not form a political overcrowd. The Kingdom of God can never be of this world, for the ideals of mankind will always transcend mundane

# The Crowd in Peace and War

and temporal limitations. Sometimes it seems as though the modern movement, for the moment described as socialistic, would be purely political. Should that prove to be the case one of two things must happen. Either it will accept the principle of nationality, as did the liberalism of the last century, and will content itself with inspiring local developments in harmony with some fine human ideal that all men can grasp, thus fostering the co-operation of nations and the formation of a powerful overcrowd. Or, on the other hand, it may set itself against the principle of nationality and the mighty forces of patriotism; in that case it will assuredly go under, for the ideal of nationalism has demonstrated its strength in our own day beyond anything that could have been expected by our forefathers two or three generations back. If anything can be confidently asserted about the stage of the world's history upon which we are now entering, it is that no ideal can possibly now succeed in forming a powerful supernational overcrowd which does not make the insurance of the integrity of nations the very stem of its structure.

Whatever the immediate future has in store, one vision still haunts the eye of faith — a vision of the ultimate unity of mankind, and of a consequent reign of peace on earth and goodwill amongst men. As in the past, through much tribulation and by slow accretion, human units have been built together into ever larger and yet more large integral bodies, thus continually extending the area of peace and replacing the arbitrament of force by the restraints and decisions of law, so surely the crystallising process must continue. Overcrowds will grow larger and

## War: Its Cause and Cure

fewer, and some day, far, far off it may well be, the needful unification of the structure of mankind will be effected, and the nations will not rule or serve one another but will live in peace, each under its own flag and all under the banner of a common and realised humanity.

One point more before we quit this branch of our subject. If the greatest step towards peace is accomplished when two crowds become willingly and contentedly united by some common ideal into a single overcrowd, it follows that nothing is more disastrous, nothing more retrograde, than the sundering of one crowd or nation into two. So long as the overcrowd is maintained the kind of sundering to which I refer does not take place. Thus to give Home Rule to Ireland or to South Africa within the limits of the Imperial Great British overcrowd may be not a weakening but a re-enforcement of the strength of the whole. Few foreigners will deny that if the various nationalities composing the Austrian Empire had been given local independence the Empire would have been strengthened. On the other hand if the United States had been divided into two independent federations, one of the North, the other of the South, the result would have been as mischievous to both halves as was the division of the English-speaking race accomplished by the American Revolution. The Scandinavian race occupies its relatively insignificant position in the world because of its incapacity to form an overcrowd. Each fraction desires entire independence, one of another, and even little Iceland manifests the same disease. Was it the Scandinavian element in our composition that took the lead when we parted company from the United States? or was it merely lack of statesmanship on

## The Crowd in Peace and War

both sides? Whatever the reason, the result has been to weaken the power of our race in the world, and to postpone (who knows for how many future centuries?) that union of many peoples under a common ideal upon which peace on earth ultimately depends. Fortunately, even as things are, the English-speaking race is not without some common cement of idealism, which unites even its utterly independent sections more closely than they are united even with their acknowledged allies. Death, said the Arabian poet, is "the slayer of delights and the sun-derer of companies." It is as true of crowds as of individuals. Had it been possible to maintain the unity of the Roman Empire, without hindering the development of nations within it, civilisation might now be a thousand years more advanced than it is. To discuss the might-have-beens of history is, however, futile. Who can tell what might have been? The future only is ours to fashion. Let us labour to establish in it as soon as may be an overmastering ideal of our common humanity, not in order that superior races and nations may rule others, but that all may flourish together, each in its own fashion, under the imposed condition of universal peace.

## CHAPTER XVII

### THE CONTEST OF IDEALS

WHEN war for life and death breaks out between two crowds their internal condition undergoes an immediate decisive change. Instead of being rivals and competitors jealous of and more or less distasteful to one another, they become open enemies and the avowed object of each is to destroy the other. The meaning of the word "destroy" used in this connection must be examined. No one will deny that the passion of destruction animates fighting crowds, but the remarkable fact is that it ceases to animate the victorious crowd as soon as its final and complete victory is secured. Destruction, therefore, is a means, not an end. Even in ancient times a victorious army did not usually slaughter the defeated. They were perhaps carried away captive or they were annexed. Once utterly defeated there was no desire to destroy the individuals of whom the defeated force was composed, but in some way to use them. Hence the destruction which a fighting crowd aims at is not that of the individuals composing the enemy crowd, but of the crowd itself, *qua* crowd, that is to say the disruption of its organisation, the ruin of its structure, and the overthrow of its ideal.

A crowd is strong or weak according to the nature of its organisation. The superiority of one crowd over another

# The Crowd in Peace and War

as a fighting force lies in its better organisation, its keener spirit, its higher discipline, its completer unity, its greater size. A mob is inferior in fighting power to a much smaller body organised as a regiment. Hence the purpose of battle is to turn the defeated army into a mob. Its structure is then destroyed, its resistance shattered. Thus, writes Kinglake, "the mere killing and wounding, which occurs whilst a fight is still hanging in doubt, does not so alter the relative numbers of the combatants as in that way to govern the result. The use of the slaughter, which takes place at that time, lies mainly in the stress which it puts upon the minds of those who, themselves remaining unhurt, are nevertheless disturbed by the sight of what is befalling their comrades. In that way a command of the means necessary for inflicting death and wounds is one element of victory. But it is far from being the chief one, nor is it by perfectness of discipline, nor yet by contempt of life, that men can assure to themselves the mastery over their foes. More or less all these things are needed; but the truly governing power is that ascendancy of the stronger over the weaker heart, which (because of the mystery of its origin) the churchmen were willing to ascribe to angels coming down from on high."

A defeated army or nation is one which has descended to a lower level of crowd-organisation than that of the victor. The defeated may remain more numerous and each individual of them as strong, healthy, and able as the victorious units: all that is nothing. The combat is not between units but between crowds, as a duel between men is not a fight between the cells of which they are built but

## The Contest of Ideals

between the two organic bodies, and even more between the souls resident within them. The death of an individual does not immediately kill the cells of his tissue, nor does the destruction of a crowd kill its units. The purpose of war is to overthrow not the fighting units but the crowd itself.

Before war can arise there must exist two opposing crowds. That suffices. It is not necessary that there should be a definite issue for them to fight about. As a rule modern nations seem to fight for some principle, and issues in politics or war appear to arise out of a contest of ideals. Yet it may be argued that this is only an appearance, and that in fact it is issues that beget ideals as often as ideals beget issues. It has been said that any war is justified by a good cause. It has also been claimed that any cause may be justified by a good war. Two similar independent crowds in contact will be hostile to one another even if that hostility is the only ideal of which they are conscious. This is evident in the case of mobs, which, if they do not coalesce and are not prevented, always fall to fighting. Thus, no sooner had Uruguay finally obtained its independence from Spain than the followers of the two leading local generals fell upon one another and divided the newly-born nation into two factions. They fought at first for no principle, merely calling themselves Whites or Reds for purposes of convenience. But the parties thus formed exist to-day. Opposing ideals caught them, but did not create them. The Whites became the country party, the Reds the party of the towns; the Whites clericals, the Reds anti-clericals.<sup>1</sup> It is an excel-

<sup>1</sup> Lord Bryce's "South America," p. 358.

# The Crowd in Peace and War

lent example of the fundamental tendency of crowds to fight, and to find out something to fight about afterwards.

However much we may wish to believe that great modern nations if they fight will fight for something — some ideal that they hold to be infinitely precious — the fact remains that it is usually difficult, often impossible, to define such a cause of contention. Wars happen first and the ideals are discovered, or at least formulated, afterwards. It is in the instinctive and growing opposition of independent rival crowds that the explosive substance consists which any spark may kindle. A national crowd, indeed, of necessity generates a national ideal and is reacted upon by it. When two such crowds fall to fighting their different ideals are opposed to one another, yet the war is not caused by those ideals but by the mere existence of the independent rival crowds. The ideals that are tried in the furnace of war are not the cause of it, though they may contribute to the victory of one crowd and the overthrow of the other. Thus at the present time, in spite of all we read and hear, we are not fighting Germany for righteousness' sake, but because Germany has been a strongly growing crowd which upset the equilibrium of Europe and aimed at the hegemony of the world. England once passed through a somewhat similar stage when a vague notion seemed to be in the air that the future of the British Empire might be an almost unlimited growth. That notion passed away, so that now the British Imperial public desires no such future domination, but would rather see the Empire take its place as a member of the vaster whole which the evolution of civilisation is preparing. Young Germany, with the consciousness of



## The Contest of Ideals

its own strength and the ignorance of inexperience in all that concerns the administration of a world-empire, feeling the growth within it and reaching forth, as do all growing crowds, came to hope and then to strive for the universal dominion which the rest of the world will not suffer. Hence the great war. Once begun, war itself reacted upon both contending groups, consolidating their overcrowdship, diminishing internal rivalries, and formulating divergent ideals which became as it were the flags of the opposing hosts.

The fundamental ideal of modern Germany is an ideal of national discipline under the guidance of science; but this degenerated in the popular mind to a mere passion for "Germany over all." For war-purposes there was small temptation to put forward abstract ideals. The whole German movement has been concrete from the beginning: the aim of all its discipline and science being mere material wealth and physical dominion. The "Kultur" they talk of means that and nothing more. The growth of this ideal has been accompanied by a corresponding development of crowd-conceit, which finds expression in such statements as the Kaiser's: "There is but one will and that is mine!" or Professor Lassen's: "We are morally and intellectually superior to all men. We are peerless. So too are our organisations and institutions." This is the language of crowd-exponents. "Kultur" does not pretend to include the German idealism of the past. What it does include, however, that is fine and precious is the magnificent national discipline which the foes of Germany should be the first to recognise, admire, and imitate. This discipline has been accomplished in the

# The Crowd in Peace and War

process of German growth, and has been accompanied by the development of a strength so eminent as to have engendered in the common herd a crowd-ideal of mere might, which for the moment carries them away, incidentally makes them the enemies of all the human race, and should unite in opposition to them as much force as is needful to overcome it.

Thus the German popular ideal induces in her opponents a higher ideal that negates it. For that ideal no name is required and none has yet been found. The Allies sometimes describe themselves as fighting for freedom, sometimes for law, sometimes for righteousness; but the fact is that they are fighting to save the structure of their own society from supercession by the new disciplined and socialistically subordinated structure which Germany has elaborated and would impose upon the world if she could conquer it. What then is the other kind of social structure which is in competition with the German? What is in very truth the ideal of the Allies which this war must make manifest and will either establish or destroy? For that is what wars accomplish. They set up and then test opposing ideals and the one that survives wins an epoch in which to realize itself. Thus the wars which resulted from the displacement of power wrought by the Renaissance and the consequent discovery of new worlds, produced religious and political liberty as their ultimate outcome and ended with the Napoleonic upheaval. Those ideals were not their cause but their consequence. The cause of them was, as always, the innate hostility of crowds, and especially of growing crowds. The fight produced the ideals, not the ideals the fight.

# The Contest of Ideals

We hear much talk nowadays of the dangers of German militarism and how it must be destroyed; but German militarism is a mere detail of the general and efficient structure and discipline of the German crowd. German industry, German commerce, every German activity has been organised on the same principles as German military power. All are parts of a single structure, an expression of a single crowd-compelling force. What is the opposite ideal which the Allies are fighting for and which the war is enabling them to realise? Unless that ideal proves to be as inspiring to them as the ideal of disciplined might is to the Germans, the Allies will not conquer. At the beginning of a war nations will fight out of sheer pugnacity. It is only when their strength begins to be exhausted that they fight on for the sake of the ideal that the war has generated or manifested. Then it is that the opposing ideals are tested in the fire of national tribulation and self-sacrifice. It is the fire of faith that ultimately wins in a world contest. Germany did not win in the Franco-German war merely because she was the stronger, but because France had nothing particular to fight for and Germany had much. In point of strength the two powers were fairly well matched, and more than once the German position was perilous in the extreme, though no one realised it. Had France been united in a disciplined enthusiasm equal to that of Germany, the war would have had a different termination.

What then actually is our ideal? Germany's is a Centralised Discipline; what have we to oppose to it? The answer is not easy, for our ideal is only now taking shape in the melting pot of war. The first principle for which

# The Crowd in Peace and War

we stand is for the variability of the human crowd. We oppose to the rigid uniformity of Prussian discipline, which would drill the world, the variety and variability of all the national crowds. We claim for each nationality, large or small, the right to be itself, to flourish in its own soil after its own fashion, to produce whatever flower of civilisation arises by free development from the particular plant. We have seen the various states of Germany suffer from Prussianisation. We have watched the failure of attempts to Prussianise Poles and Alsatians. We have observed that Prussianism has learnt nothing from those failures. We have laughed at the absurdities of the Captain of Koenig and shuddered with disgust at such incidents as the cutting down of the lame cobbler of Zabern by Lieutenant von Foerstner. We know that thus Prussia would behave to the rest of the world if she obtained control over it. We therefore stand for the opposite of that kind of uniform discipline. We oppose to a general Prussianisation the ideal of national variety, national freedom from internal control by any external crowd. We in England have found the imperial value of national freedom within the limits of the imperial overcrowd. We have seen it applied with success to Canada first, then to the other colonies which have grown one by one into nations, then to South Africa, and last of all in prospect to Ireland and tentatively to India. We have also observed how failure to apply this principle has been the ruin of the Turkish Empire and how it has sapped the life of Austria. Thus, by long experience and now by the contrariety of war, a faith in the integrity of nationalities has become part of our imperial ideal, part also of the common ideal shared by

## The Contest of Ideals

all the allied powers. The future, if Germany is defeated, will see no more partitions of Poland, and is not likely to behold serious attempts to Russify the Finns or to Frenchify or Anglicise any nation whatsoever. If Germany were to become the overcrowd of Europe, persistent attempts would be made to Teutonise us all; but if the Allies are finally victorious, the nations will never again be subjected to any the like peril. One great factor in the ideal of the Allies may therefore be named the ideal of National Diversity.

National diversity, being the natural line of human crowd development, can be prevented only by dire compulsion. It follows that he who would encourage the diversity of nations must necessarily be opposed to the compulsion of crowds by the imposed force of an overcrowd. This consideration brings us nearer to the heart of our ideal. Is it not really overcrowd compulsion that we are combating? Is it not, therefore, voluntary imperial organisation towards which we are unconsciously aiming? Great Britain has discovered that the strength of the Empire depends upon the willingness of all its parts to belong together. The German imperial ideal is the very opposite of that. She would form a world-empire by force, she would organise it by force, she would direct it by a single will to a single end. The ideal of the Allies can but be the opposite of that. Whether they know it or not, they are endeavouring to overthrow that ideal and substitute the opposite. It is voluntary as contrasted with compulsory overcrowdship that are at grips, and whichever wins will become the type of world-organisation in the epoch that is opening.

# The Crowd in Peace and War

But just as the Prussian ideal of force, that is to say of enforced discipline and uniformity, pervades the whole Teutonic body politic, so, if the opposite ideal wins, must liberty pervade the age that victory for it will usher in: Liberty, observe, not necessarily individual freedom, which has always to fight for itself within each crowd. It is crowd-liberty that claims extension: not indeed the liberty of crowds to sunder themselves from overcrowds, but their liberty to develop internally without the direction or control of any overcrowd. See how opposed this crowd-liberty is to the German ideal of "Germany over all," in other words "Germany the world's overcrowd"! If our ideal were to prevail, no nation would be overcrowd to any other, but all nations would be elements of supernational overcrowds to which they would belong side by side, not one above another. Not "Germany over all," but "Germany alongside of all" would have to be the limit of German ambition thenceforth and for ever.

This ideal of internal crowd independence cannot end with nations. Let it once become established as the root-principle of human organisation and it must of necessity penetrate deeply into the heart of social human life. The new age would develop it, would find new uses for it, new expressions of it, and the outcome would become what no one can foretell. Mankind, during the last ten thousand years at least, has been growing in civilisation as the human overcrowds have increased in size and decreased in number. Progress in this direction is likely to be continued. But now it seems as though side by side with it a process, not of division but of sub-

## The Contest of Ideals

division, may be set up; whereby within each overcrowd, fostered and protected by it, subordinate crowds, internally independent, may tend to increase in number. Thus the diversity of the past which led to wars may be replaced by a new and more precious diversity developed locally under the ægis of peace. The dull and pitiable uniformity, which modern civilization tends to impose, may then give way to a rich variety, the expression of racial, national, and local differences. The infinite variability of individuals may thus be provided with a larger opportunity of manifestation and expression than in an age of uniformity, such as the Germanizing of the world would bring about.

Victory and defeat are not matters of terms of peace, of written documents, and ratified treaties; they are a condition of the heart of a crowd. A defeated crowd may have to suffer the loss of territory or of wealth; it may have to promise this or that. All such results and expressions of defeat are of minor importance. What does matter is that the crowd's ideal has been weighed in the balance of the inquest of the world and found wanting. War according to the Prussians is a legitimate political agency, to be prepared for and brought into being for the sake of the profitable material results of victory. They never asked themselves what would be the effect of defeat. Now they have made war after long preparation, at a moment of their own choosing, and for no other end than their national aggrandisement. They have put their theory to the test of experiment. They are trying their ideal in the fire. In case of defeat their theory will be overthrown, their ideal destroyed. It may linger on

# The Crowd in Peace and War

in the minds of a few backward individuals for a generation or two, but they will be powerless to inspire a national crowd with it so long as the human epoch now being ushered in endures. Such is the effect of a war if fought out to a finish.

No nation can emerge from war as it went in. War changes both conqueror and conquered. It tests the ideals of both, strengthening that of the victor and destroying that of the defeated. There is no need to express these results in terms of peace. They belong thenceforward to the structure of nations. Terms of peace indeed, unless they involve annexations, are relatively unimportant in the long vista of the life of nations. What is important is the change of national character that war may produce. From the Franco-German war France and Germany emerged new peoples. What the new France will grow into none can say, but its crowd-character is evidently different from that of the France of the past. The new Germany, the Germany of the Empire, we all know, and we do not wholly admire it. It brought home from the fields of France an overweening imperial pride, from which frightful misfortune may the Lord deliver us by victory in the present contest! Such a change of national character affects nations differently, but it does affect them all. If, as we proudly hope, the Allies should prove ultimately victorious in the present struggle, they will come forth from the fire, cast into a new mould. Let us pray that the seal of all that is noblest in the ideal developed in the war may be set upon them and that its dross may be refined away in the furnace of our present affliction. That result alone justifies war and sanctifies the sac-



## The Contest of Ideals

rifices that it calls for, making the death of each who falls on the field, a rich and precious contribution to the happiness of all the generations that come after and shape the fair and healthy structure of a nobler humanity.

## CHAPTER XVIII

### THE CROWD AT WAR

CROWDS possess every degree of self-consciousness from the vague sense of unity, felt, for example, by the English-speaking race, to the strong perception of integral social life in a regiment. So soon as a crowd realises that it is fighting against another, not alone for the life and death of its units, but for the continued separate existence of its corporate self, it of necessity integrates into as compact an organism as it is capable of becoming. This is what happens to a nation at war. War integrates, peace differentiates. A crowd at war should have but one purpose — victory. To that end, therefore, it needs to be as completely organised as a hive of bees. No room is left for variety of opinion or freedom of individual choice. The common end must be pursued in common and every individual must lose his freedom and take his allotted place in the organic whole. A crowd that can thus perfectly organise itself is the strongest that can be fashioned out of a given group of people. In proportion as a crowd lacks this capacity for being organised it lacks military might. In time of peace the constraining or crystallising force within a national crowd is relatively weaker, so that individual freedom has and should have considerable play. Only thus can the intellectual side of man develop and mani-

## The Crowd at War

fest itself in the creation of fine works. In such normal times the crowd is indeed the enemy of the individual, and their interests are divergent. But in time of war there is no place in a fighting country for an unco-ordinated individual. If his country is to attain its fullest strength, all must be co-ordinated together, and individual freedom must be in abeyance.

In former days it was impossible to co-ordinate for war purposes more than a small part of a nation; but modern conditions have altered all that. Now, by aid of developed means of communication, the complete co-ordination of all has been rendered possible, and those countries which have devoted themselves scientifically to preparation for war have learnt how to mobilise all the forces of a nation to the purpose of fighting. If one combatant is thus organised, its enemy must submit to a like discipline. If in one country individual liberty is entirely done away with, in the interests of the crowd's collective power, its opponents must submit to a like suspension of freedom, or they cannot expect to be victorious. Citizens, whose individualism is so strong that they will not submit themselves to such restraint, must either be compelled to submit to it, or should sacrifice their citizenship. This does not necessarily mean that all citizens must fight. Some are weaklings; some are cowards; some can do better work at home than at the front; these and a good many others are better suited for the various kinds of work that need to be done outside the fighting line. But all must be ready to perform the function indicated for them by the hierarchies of authority that war should install.

# The Crowd in Peace and War

Of the powers now at war, Germany, having passed through the discipline of several preceding wars within the memory of living men, has learnt many an important secret of domestic organisation, highly deleterious to the individual in times of peace, but of supreme value to the nation in time of war. The people of Great Britain, on the other hand, have no remembered experience of a national war for life and death. Wars we have had, but the nation has never within the memory of man been called upon to organise its whole strength for a war, and our insular position adds to the detachment with which ordinary English people have been able to regard war throughout the whole of what we may call the modern epoch. The long peace we have enjoyed at home has produced in the national crowd its normal disintegrating effect. We have broken up at home into parties, which have become, to many, more interesting than the nation itself; whilst of late years the socialist-labour party in particular has been far more interested in its own prosperity, organisation, and political power than in the prosperity of the nation at large.

Hence war finds us internally unprepared. Not only were we equipped with only a trifling military force, but the Government of the country had for years possessed so little foresight that the very machinery for manufacturing arms and equipment for a large force did not exist and had not even been planned for. It follows that whereas on the call to arms Germany rose as one man to the summons and each individual fitted immediately into the place prepared for him, in England, when war struck us, all we could do as a nation was to put our political

## The Crowd at War

oppositions aside and hope that the Government would be able to organise the country, if it was not hampered by a criticising opposition. So far so good, but that was only a short step, which organised nothing, but merely removed some impediments out of the way of organisation.

There are only two ways whereby a crowd can be wrought into a concentrated organic unity: a passion of collective emotion shared by every unit, or an imposed organisation as elaborate as that of a regiment. The democratic way of going to work is to try and create such a collective emotion; but that takes time. The non-democratic procedure is to impose a military organisation on all; that can be done quickly if enough leaders can be found, able to work together and possessed of the needful organising capacity. A universal passion of self-sacrificing patriotism, possessing every individual in the country so completely that he willingly loses his individuality in the collective whole, and offers himself for any and every service, without question of wage, or hours of labour, or any limitation whatever except his own utmost strength — such a crowd-compelling passion will go very far toward producing the needful organisation. At any rate it creates conditions under which to organise is easy, whilst it raises the power and efficiency of each individual to the highest degree. Such a passion, however, will not kindle itself, but must be artfully kindled by immense and unceasing organised work, which only a department of government can nationally supply and direct. A few politicians making a few well-advertised speeches will accomplish little. Every village, every street in every town, every group of workmen must be vigorously ha-

# The Crowd in Peace and War

ranged, day after day and week after week, if the whole national crowd is to be wrought up to the required white heat. Short of such a domestic campaign the condition of the people will continue lukewarm and the nation will remain weak and disorganised and will not deserve victory. The alternative, and the only alternative, to this process of agitation is compulsory universal organisation from above. By some means or other a modern nation at war must be organised as elaborately as a regiment. If it will not accomplish this transformation by its own enthusiasm, the transformation must be imposed upon it with the concurrence of that part of the population which is actively patriotic. Now no regiment can be democratically governed. There does not exist a democracy in the world that admits democratic principles to operate within its army. The organisation of the army in the United States is as undemocratic as it is in Germany. Orders from above, unquestioning obedience from below — these are necessary in every army and they must be submitted to by every individual citizen of a nation at war.

It follows that the first step to be taken for national war organisation is the suspension of every democratic principle and expedient in government and administration for so long as the war lasts. Every man's life and powers belong to the country as a whole. Each must do what he is ordered to do. If he is best suited to fight he must fight. If he possesses skill that can be more profitably turned to the production of munitions of war, or to transportation, or to office work, or to the medical service, he must employ that skill as ordered. He must take

## The Crowd at War

without question the pay given to him. He must work as many hours as it is possible for him to work. He must abandon every relaxation or indulgence not essential to his fitness for labour. If he will not thus act voluntarily he must thus act under compulsion, and subject to the same penalty as awaits a deserter in the field.

In a life and death struggle there is no other alternative. The crowd must be all in all, the individual nothing but a crowd-unit. The fighting crowd, which most closely approximates to this ideal, will assuredly win, other things being equal. An attempt to run democracy at home and war abroad would be doomed to failure. If the Government has not the pluck to do its duty (convinced that there does exist in the country enough patriotism to give it the requisite compelling force) it is a traitor government. A war-government that descends to negotiating with either capital or labour is one unsuited to command a fighting nation.

There is probably no better or quicker way to make the whole mass of a nation understand that it is veritably at war than by bringing it at once and completely under military discipline. So to act will be infinitely more effectual towards kindling the national spirit than any number of public meetings addressed by the most eloquent orators. Moreover nothing is more certain than that as soon as a crowd realises that it is fighting for life and death, it will submit to a kind of dictation which its units would not willingly suffer in days of peace. Observe how trade unions can dominate and dictate to their members so long as they are actively engaged in economic contests. An aggressive minority can always

## The Crowd in Peace and War

drag an indifferent majority into a strike. If that is so in semi-peaceful oppositions, it is much more emphatically true in time of war. A government can then be as despotic as it pleases in the interest of victory, and if victorious will always be forgiven. A nation in danger of defeat will destroy a government none the less mercilessly that it has approached defeat through the truckling of that government to the crowd's own weaknesses.

One thing can be securely asserted of every healthy nation in time of war: the patriotism of its citizens will be, or can be, raised to any required pitch of elevation if they are boldly and wisely led. According to von Treitschke, "it is only in war that a people becomes in 'very deed a people.'" The expression is clumsy but the sense true enough. It is then chiefly, and for some only then, that love of country becomes an exalted emotion felt by individuals of all classes and ranks. The man who then does not love his country is, as Lord Morley said, "not only odious and detestable in the public eye, but 'there is a screw loose in the man himself.'" Or in the words of Kinglake, "a man's love of his country is understood to represent something more than common benevolence towards the persons living within it. For if he be 'the citizen of an ancient state, blessed with freedom, 'renowned in arms, and holding wide sway in the world, 'his love of his country means something of attachment 'to the institutions which have made her what she is — 'means something of pride in the long-suffering, and the 'battle, and the strife which have shed glory upon his 'countrymen in his own time, and upon their fathers in



## The Crowd at War

“the time before him. It means that he feels his country’s honour to be a main term and element of his own content. It means that he is bent upon the upholding of her dominion, and is so tempered as to become the sudden enemy of any man who, even though he be not an invader, still attempts to hack at her power.”

War, even sometimes unsuccessful war, has this merit that it may unify a people as nothing else can. It exalts their patriotism and inspires individual citizens with unselfish ideals, which may last long after the return of peace. It is therefore the duty of those to whom falls the direction of a nation during war-time to foster in every way all the forces that make for the growth of the sense of patriotism and to suppress without hesitation those that have a contrary tendency, by whatever name they may be called. For the war-crowd is altogether different from the peace-crowd. The war-crowd reduces to insignificance all the subordinate crowds within the nation. We can behold an excellent example of this in the depletion of the universities at the present war-time. No English subordinate crowd is stronger than one of our old universities. Their consciousness of corporate existence, their pride in it, their *esprit de corps*, are all of a pronounced type. Just as soon as war broke out Oxford and Cambridge were deserted by practically every undergraduate capable of bearing arms. The national over-crowd swallowed up the university subordinate crowd at once. It was not in many cases the sporting desire to fight that led these youths to enlist. It was often a sheer sense of duty. “I look upon the profession of arms,” said one of them, “with unutterable loathing. But, by

## The Crowd in Peace and War

“Heaven, I will not stay here and let the other fellows “fight for me without taking a hand myself.” The nation captured these individuals and swallowed them up as mere units into itself. Where patriotism prevails the result is inevitable. A man needs no tuition to be captivated by that kind of crowd-emotion. Almost everybody will catch it if he be once incorporated, whether by choice or by compulsion, into the organised body.

Foreign nations compel their youths into their armies, and they become as much seized by the war-spirit as if they had enlisted voluntarily. The same would be true with us or with any people. Organise a nation for war in the presence of war and a unifying spirit will pervade them in spite of themselves. Shirkers will become industrious, strikers will work overtime. Complaints will become insignificant if once the nation lays hold upon its own and infuses into all the spirit of patriotism — easiest of all infections to catch, easiest to develop, easiest to direct. But you cannot negotiate for patriotism. You must assume its existence, call for its exercise by every one without exception, and then you will not fail to find it. It is potentially everywhere. It is for the nation’s leaders to direct and if necessary force it into channels of activity.

## CHAPTER XIX

### THE VALUE OF THE CROWD

PHILOSOPHICAL and political writers have seldom had much good to say about crowds. The intellectual impotence of collective humanity is obvious. The mob has so often appeared in glaring conspicuity as a raging wild beast, destroying much that is precious to all noble souls. The faults of the public — its silly sentimentality, its fickleness, its lack of restraint, its noisy clamour about matters often of small moment, its yet more annoying indifference to others of vital importance, its susceptibility to the wiles of demagogues, its admiration of itself — these and countless other imperfections and vices are so evident that the impulse of an intelligent person must often be to condemn and despise it as a beast of a low order. Such a conclusion, however, must be erroneous, for the single and sufficient reason that the social instinct, by which crowds are formed, is as essential a part of the nature of every individual as is his individualistic instinct. Moreover, if we consider what parts of a man's nature belong to him as an individual and what parts respond to his condition as a social unit, we are led to conclude that his reasoning powers are a main part of the former, his emotions of the latter. It will, of course, be contended, and justly contended, that man, as an individual, not only reasons but also enjoys or suffers

# The Crowd in Peace and War

from those keen emotions which arise out of the love of one individual for another, and that such emotions are clearly of an individualistic sort; yet even those have been elevated, refined, and have found their noblest expression in a social atmosphere, where the consciousness that the like emotions are, or may be, experienced by all other individuals enhances them through sympathy and enlarges them by resonance from other hearts in unison.

Most human emotions, however, are fundamentally social. They persist only because they are shared. All the great ideals, the great faiths, the high strivings, the launchings forth towards imagined islands of the blest — these have been the gifts of the gods to collective humanity. The elevation of the mass of mankind from the level of brutes, how has that been accomplished but by means of the crowd? The flight of fancy, the revelation granted to one man, caught up from him by his followers as individuals and spread by them to a widening circle, presently generates a crowd-movement whereby it is imposed upon the laggard mass, who are thus carried forward. The Franciscan movement is an obvious example, fortunately fully recorded in its early stages. We can read how it took form in Francis himself, how it first entrapped a few of those with whom he came personally into contact, then spread to the multitude, then formed and organised a crowd, by which it was carried all over Western Europe. The fire that burned in Francis became indeed a feeble glimmer far away at the edges of his crowd, but even there it was a glimmer. The love that welled forth from his heart like a volcano availed, in its crowd-incarnation, to raise slightly but permanently the

# The Value of the Crowd

general goodwill of mankind. If to-day, as we look with kindness upon man and beast, and especially upon the unfortunate, the pitiful, the sorrowing, and the bereaved, some at least of the emotion that stirs within us still proceeds by unbroken descent from the sensitively loving heart of the great gentleman of Assisi.

As it is with sublime emotions so likewise is it with small. How does the multitude, many of whom never read a line he wrote, become conscious of the greatness of Shakespeare? That recognition has been imposed upon them by crowd-hypnotism; and so it is with all reputations. They are the ultimate reaction of some crowd from the impact of a man upon it. Individuals initiate the recognition, but a reputation is not formed till that recognition has been so imposed upon some crowd as to be shared and accepted by a mass of men, individually quite incapable of originating it.

Every revelation comes, and must come, to an individual; the crowd is the medium in which the germ of individual emotion is hatched and spread. Save for cultivation in that medium the emotion would merely flit through a single heart and disappear. It must be deposited as a fertilised germ in a suitable soil before it can attain a separate and spreading life of its own. For such a life it needs a public to feed on and root in. The fertilisation of all kinds of cells has received the attention of a generation of able biologists; will not some one devote a like study to the fertilisation of the germ of an ideal? That likewise proceeds from a kind of marriage. When Francis was born, with his richly sympathetic nature, itself the product of a previous generation, that nature

## The Crowd in Peace and War

of his resembled an unfertilised egg. At some definite moment a germ entered that egg from without — some accident of an event beheld, or word spoken within his hearing — and thereupon the egg was fertilised and all the future was thenceforward potential within him. Thus, I hold, it is with all new ideals; they arise at some point of contact, where a vague possibility is turned into a definite actuality by the union of two previously unconnected factors. The histories of art, philosophy, religion, afford countless examples of such happenings. All the great schools of art have arisen from the meeting of previously unassociated styles. Ancient Egyptian art was born from the contact of some invading race with the previously settled population of the Valley of the Nile. Babylonian art had a like origin when the hill folk of Elam met Ea, the fish. Where the inland art of Asia Minor came in contact with the peoples of the sea the seed of Minoan art was fructified. Again when the peoples of the North pressed down on to the Ægean and met the art traditions and the craftsmen of late Mycenaean days, and likewise came in contact, through the Phœnicians and others, with the ancient schools of Egypt and Mesopotamia, there arose by successive marriages of these several ideals that new and richly endowed art which grew to be the wonderful product of classical Greece. And Greek art in its turn, in contact with Persia and presently also with the civilisation of Rome, changed in character and, by new combinations, generated the Byzantine, the Moslem, and the Barbarian schools, out of which last Gothic proceeded. Every successive style was offspring of a marriage, and each arose

# The Value of the Crowd

within the area of some crowd and took its life and strength from a social organism.

Thus it is likewise with religions, thus also with schools of philosophy, and thus with all the ideals by which the laggard masses of mankind are carried forward. Duty, public spirit, self-sacrifice, honour, probity, justice, and all the finest flowers of manhood, although each in its turn has been born within the heart of some individual, each has taken root in a crowd, and grown and spread by crowd-agency.

Nature's prodigality with seed is one of the common-places of every one's observation. "Of a thousand," — one might perhaps as truthfully say, of a million, — "seeds she "often brings but one to bear": and this is true also of the seeds of ideals. Multitudes of them are continually being deposited in the hearts of individuals, but only now and then does one take root and grow into visibility. A microbe only flourishes on a suitable culture, and then it may flourish with astounding prodigality. Thus also is it with new ideals. In the Roman Empire what a profusion of religious notions was put forth! Each no doubt possessed some excellent quality, but only Christianity matched its place and day, and so took root, and rapidly obtained its ascendancy over the minds of the multitude. Thus also was it with Islam, which germinated in the heart of a camel-driver and spread victoriously over half the West within a few generations. It was not a unique product; it was one of many forthputtings of the hungry Arabian heart, but it was the only one for which the soil had been perfectly prepared.

The infant mortality of ideals is appalling. They are

# The Crowd in Peace and War

born in the hearts of many of us and for the most part perish unuttered. Of those that are expressed, how few are acceptable even to the few! Of those that obtain a body of adherents, how few even transiently touch the heart of a multitude! Whilst the ideals that overrun the world and master whole generations of mankind are scarcely more than the reader can count. Each one of them, however, has an endless value. They may come in the silence of the night, thrill the heart of some lonely watcher, and swiftly vanish away even from him; but such evanescent visions have done their work. Or they may be uttered by him and find acceptance in his small personal entourage, quickening that, for a brief moment perhaps, into keener sensibility. Or they may spread yet more widely. But each does its work. Each is so far precious in that it opens some little glimpse out of the darkness of mere materialism. Each is a revelation, distorted, clouded it may be, but yet assuredly a revelation of something further on, something that draws the heart upward, outward, onward toward the as yet unattained.

The shortness of human life is the commonest of commonplaces. All admit it. Those who have passed middle life realise it vividly. But what do we mean by "shortness" — short in comparison with what? What is the long thing, equally plainly realised within us, compared with which the life of a man is short? Is it not the duration of the life of the crowd? The crowd to which an individual belongs lives on and on, though he passes swiftly away. Yet within him at every moment is both his own individual life and the life of the crowd. He has



# The Value of the Crowd

consciousness of both — his own short individual life and his share of the long crowd-life. The crowd lives while the ideal it incorporates endures. When a great national ideal dies a nation dies. Thus the Egypt of the Pharaohs perished, thus Imperial Rome; thus also religious crowds, political parties, and the rest have come and gone, some lasting longer than others, but death ultimately awaiting all.

It is by the death of crowds that room is made in the world for the succession of great ideals, each in its turn an experiment by which the whole race of mankind is enriched. The whole area of the past is a great garden of various ideals, which have flourished, each in its own bed, and been the glory of a given time and place. That is what gives its changeful splendour to human history. That is the cause of the infinite variety of the world's many schools and styles of art. Thence arise all the literatures of all the ages, each resplendent with a brilliance of its own. There is one glory of the Greek, another of the Roman, and another of the Arab. Each in its turn has to perish that the rest may in their turn arise. As it has been so will it be. The great nations, languages, arts, literatures, and all other products of the ideals of our own day will not last for ever. Some of them are now growing, some culminating, some failing. All will ultimately fail and die and others now inconceivable will take their place.

An ideal that arises in the heart of an individual is like a spark struck from steel by a flint — gone in a moment, unless it ignites some inflammable mass. An ideal that is incorporated in a crowd is a burning lamp. It is only

# The Crowd in Peace and War

a crowd that can give continuity to the combustion. Ideals incorporated in crowds may be described as ideals on trial. A crowd thus animated has to endure or go under in the competition of the world. If the ideal is in conformity with cosmic structure, the crowd that incorporates it may live long. If the ideal is not in such conformity, the crowd will soon be broken up. Many an ideal has thus been tried and found wanting; others are still on their trial.

The German ideal is on trial at the present day. Like all the ideals of great nations it is of a mixed sort and not to be defined in mere words. Great national ideals are only definable by action — by the conduct of nations and their human output, generation after generation. As the German nation is a very new crowd so is its ideal a new ideal, never before tried as the motive power of any nation. I have described it for shortness as the ideal of National Discipline. That ideal, developed, expounded, and enforced by Prussia, is undoubtedly a fine one, and the war has manifested its value in the sight of the whole world. All the enemies of Germany are endeavoring to imitate it and regretting that they did not adopt it sooner. It has been tried and it has succeeded. If the Prussian ideal were that and that only, the world might gladly accept Prussian leadership and learn from her an invaluable lesson. But no national ideal is simple. National ideals are not so easily definable and, as aforesaid, are completely defined only by national deeds. The Prussian people stand in point of time many generations nearer to barbarism than any of the nations opposed to them. Thus Prussia cannot but give a barbaric form to her ideal,

## The Value of the Crowd

however fundamentally sound it may be. Prussia, developed by her ideal of National Discipline and greatly strengthened by it, has been led to mistake that strength for the ideal that produced it and to worship the result instead of the cause. Hence her barbaric admiration of strength for its own sake, strength as superior to good faith, honour, integrity, justice, humanity, and all the other national virtues that the course of history has revealed. The fire of war, however, irrespective of which side wins, is already manifesting what is wrong as well as what is right in the Prussian ideal, and the long ages that are to come will have no difficulty in deciding the relative merits of national discipline and national dishonour as factors in the present struggle.

I cite this merely as an example of how the ideals of nations are tested and purified in the furnace of international strife, whether in open war or in peaceful competition. The most sensitive man in Great Britain to the condition of any crowd with which he is in contact, the most sensitive crowd-exponent, is Mr. Lloyd George, and this is what the war has taught him, as he told the people of Manchester on 3 June, 1915: "We were the "worst organised nation in the world for this war. . . . "We are fighting against the best organised community "in the world — the best organised, whether for war or "for peace — and we have been employing too much of "the haphazard, leisurely, go-as-you-please methods which, "believe me, would not have enabled us to maintain our "place as a nation, even in peace, very much longer." That is how the sound part of even an enemy's ideal gets established and understood throughout the world.

# The Crowd in Peace and War

An ideal, that has been tried by a crowd and has succeeded, thus enters into the common stock of the ideal of humanity. No longer has it need of a special crowd to incorporate it. It becomes incorporated in humanity as a whole. Nations are the structure of the human world, but what once belongs to humanity has no need of a mere nation to preserve it. What have been national ideals in a past stage may become individual ideals for all future time. "We require," says Dr. Chalmers Mitchell, "variety, different ideals among which to choose, and "freedom to make our choice." That is where the individual comes in. He must be carried away by the ideal of his own nation and time; from that no man can escape. But an individual is not confined, as a nation is, to a single ideal. He can pursue many. He can cultivate the whole gamut of fine ideals the world has ever experimented with and established. The total of these tried and established ideals forms what we call "the moral law," which is binding upon all crowds and all individuals alike.

I cannot do better than conclude this chapter with a further citation from Dr. Chalmer Mitchell's admirable essay entitled "Evolution and the War:"—

"I assert as a biological fact that the moral law is as "real and as external to man as the starry vault. It has "no secure seat in any single man or in any single nation. "It is the work of the blood and tears of long generations "of men. It is not in man, inborn or innate, but is en- "shrined in his traditions, in his customs, in his literature, "and his religion. Its creation and sustenance are the "crowning glory of man, and his consciousness of it puts "him in a high place above the animal world. Men

## The Value of the Crowd

“live and die; nations rise and fall; but the struggle of  
“individual lives and of individual nations must be  
“measured, not by their immediate needs, but as they  
“tend to the debasement or perfection of man’s great  
“achievement.”

## CHAPTER XX

### THE JUST MEAN

**G**EORGE SAND<sup>1</sup> puts the following diatribe into the mouth of the revolutionary "Everard" (the lawyer Michel):—

"Tu rêves une liberté de l'individu qui ne peut se concilier avec le devoir général. Tu as beaucoup travaillé à conquérir cette liberté pour toi-même. Tu l'as perdue dans l'abandon du cœur à des affections terrestres qui ne l'ont pas satisfait, et à présent tu te reprends toi-même dans une vie d'austérité que j'approuve et que j'aime, mais dont tu étends à tort l'application à tous les actes de ta volonté et de ton intelligence. Tu te dis que ta personne t'appartient et qu'il en est ainsi de ton âme. Eh bien! voilà un sophisme pire que tous ceux que tu me reproches et plus dangereux, puisque tu es maître d'en faire la loi de ta propre vie, tandis que les miens ne peuvent se réaliser sans des miracles. Songe à ceci que, si tous les amants de la vérité absolue disaient comme toi adieu à leur pays, à leurs frères, à leur tâche, non seulement la vérité absolue, mais encore la vérité relative n'auraient plus un seul adepte. Car la vérité ne monte pas en croupe des fuyards et ne galope pas avec eux. Elle n'est pas dans la solitude, rêveur que tu es! Elle ne parle pas dans les plantes et dans les

<sup>1</sup> "Hist. de ma Vie." Paris, 1899; Vol. IV, p. 342.

## The Just Mean

“oiseaux, ou c'est d'une voix si mystérieuse que les hommes ne la comprennent pas. Le divin philosophe que tu chéris le savait bien quand il disait à ses disciples: 'Là où vous serez seulement trois réunis, en mon nom, mon esprit sera avec vous.'”

This eloquent passage poses, as so many other writers and speakers have posed, the great problem which each one of us has to face: Where are we to draw the line between our duty to ourselves and to one another individually, and our duty to the crowd? A pure individualist must atrophy into an entirely barren, selfish, and ultimately miserable being. An uncritical socialist, who is the mere unit of a crowd, must be a narrow-minded bigot, the slave of his surroundings, the voice of every current of public emotion, the flotsam and jetsam of the stormy ocean of life. Individualism against socialism: that has been a contest waged within men and mankind from the remotest ages. It is the great domestic issue for most of the progressive nations at the present day. Neither of the two contending principles can ultimately succeed. A wisely living individual and a wisely constructed polity alike must combine both in a balanced equilibrium, and this because man is neither a wholly gregarious nor a wholly non-gregarious animal. The service of mankind by each and the free development of the individual within no narrow limits have both to be kept in view. The socialist and the individualist alike must fail because each would effect one of these ends by destroying the other. It is as absurd to be a socialist as to be an individualist. No sane man can help being an individual and passionately desiring individual free-

# The Crowd in Peace and War

dom; neither is it possible for him to avoid capture by various social organisms. He is of necessity both an individual and a social unit simultaneously. Hence the wise man must aim at the attainment of a condition which shall be a mean between individualism and socialism. He must be both individualist and socialist at once. He must strive for the development of himself as an individual and at the same time for the development of the organic crowds he belongs to as crowds. He must not, however, agree to starve himself for the sake of a crowd, nor must he neglect his duty to crowds for his own ease and pleasure. In practical politics he must take a middle line.

Morris criticised Rosetti for being too much of an individualist. "I cannot say," he wrote, "how it was "that Rosetti took no interest in politics. . . . The truth "is he cared for nothing but individual and personal "matters; chiefly of course in relation to art and litera- "ture; but he would take abundant trouble to help any "one person who was in distress of mind or body; but "the evils of any mass of people he could not bring his "mind to bear upon." Morris himself, on the contrary, erred in the other direction and, as Mr. Clutton Brock avers, "was always more concerned about general evils "than about the troubles of individuals, and in that "respect he belonged peculiarly to his own age."

The greatest men and the culminating periods of civilisation have attained a temporary equilibrium between individual freedom and crowd subservience. Too much individualism is characteristic of times of enterprise and growth; too much socialism of times of suspended activity or slow decay. It is the free individual who has the



## The Just Mean

courage to think for himself, to plan and organise, to launch forth into the unknown world of thought, of faith, or of action; but it is the social organism destined to survive him which holds and transmits whatever part of his achievement the individual has been able to impress upon it. A citizen as such is a mere cell of a crowd; a free individual may at any moment, through a flash of insight, become, if only for a moment, a crowd-leader. Thus, as I now write, I am doubtless for the most part only expressing in more or less connected form the ideas that are vaguely floating about in the minds of the public of my day, but now and then I may chance to set down some new idea, born out of contact between those others, which may strike some of my readers as true, may by them be transmitted onward, and may ultimately become a tiny part of the general ideals of a future day. Any of us at any time may make a light remark, the product of a moment's intuition, which may chance to be heard by others and so to influence one or two, who may hand it on, and thus passing from mouth to mouth, it may spread throughout the human organism. All the great movements of the world have started from such insignificant seed.

Some would-be prophets have bidden us slay within ourselves what they call the great evil which devours us — personality; or as Hartmann put it, "*l'abandon complet de l'individualité au processus cosmique pour que celui-ci puisse atteindre son but qui est la délivrance générale du monde.*" Alas! the cosmic process alone will accomplish no such deliverance. Moreover, deliverance would be death. Life is in the struggle (alike within

# The Crowd in Peace and War

the individual and within humanity as a whole) between the individualistic and the social instincts and tendencies. St. Paul felt it, and the pain of the strife. He found within himself the two laws at variance. He felt that "other law in his members warring against the law of his mind and bringing it into subjection," and he cried aloud, "Oh wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me?" No one will ever deliver us. The double nature of man will always endure and will always be at variance. To live is thus to suffer; the more developed the life, the greater the suffering. Buddhism tells us that this suffering can be avoided only by a total abandonment of individuality and absorption of the individual in what is in fact the universal crowd. It is a cowardly escape. The individual must incessantly fight to maintain his individuality and to shun that entire absorption. Yet in so fighting the wise man will avoid going to the other extreme. He will regulate, in the words of Pater's Marius "what he does, still more what he abstains from doing, "not so much through his own free election, as from a "deference, an 'assent,' entire, habitual, unconscious, "to custom — to the actual habit or fashion of others, "from whom he could not endure to break away, any more "than he would care to be out of agreement with them on "questions of mere manner, or, say, even of dress."

But if the wise man will thus in his actions conform to the prejudices and ideals of the crowd to which he is content to belong, he will never allow it to govern his thoughts or imprison his faith. It was, I suppose, the provocation of such threatened dominance over the mind rather than the heart, that called forth the following energetic

## The Just Mean

protest from Emerson in his essay on the "Conduct of Life":—

"Leave this hypocritical prating about the masses. "Masses are rude, lame, pernicious in their demands "and influence, and need not to be flattered, but to be "schooled. I wish not to concede anything to them, but "to tame, drill, divide, and break them up, and draw "individuals out of them. The worst of charity is that "the lives you are asked to preserve are not worth pre- "serving. Masses! The calamity is the masses. I do "not wish any mass at all, but honest men only, lovely, "sweet and accomplished women only, and no shovel- "handed, narrow-brained, gin-drinking million stocking- "ers or lazzaroni at all. . . . Away with this hurrah of "masses, and let us have the considerate vote of single "men spoken on their honor and their conscience."

Emerson would have agreed with that disgruntled Greek who had engraved on a kotyle, found at Chiusi,

"This man said that the folk were a bad lot."

The folk are in truth an imperfect lot, but so too is every individual; fortunately the imperfection of the one is the counterpart of the strength of the other. The crowd is weak, or rather lacking, in mind; the individual is gifted with reason which may be developed to any extent, if kept untrammelled by crowd-prejudice. The individual is liable to be selfish and unemotional, strong in science but weak in faith; the crowd is made and maintained by enthusiasm. The individual mind should be concerned with the discovery of truth; the collective mind with right feeling. Hence it is the duty of the wise man to keep his

# The Crowd in Peace and War

mind free from crowd-dominance in relation to all matters of fact and truth, but to yield to crowd-influence where he can share its healthy emotion. Not all crowd-emotions are sound; far from it. Nora, in Ibsen's "Doll's House," whom Helmer had accused of not understanding the society in which she lived, replied: "No, I don't. But I shall try to. I must make up my mind which is right, society or I." The individual's intelligence must decide as to the rightness of any crowd's tendencies and admiration; where he can share them, with the approval of his own reason, let him do so whole-heartedly; but where he is convinced that the crowd is wrongly inspired, he must courageously withdraw himself from it, even unto martyrdom, saying in the noble lines of Frederick Myers:

"Yea with one voice, O world, tho' thou deniest,  
Stand thou on that side, for on this am I."

In emotion then we may be of the crowd, but in thought should be crowd-free; such is the law of the Just Mean as it applies to the individual. What is the form of that law as applied to the crowd itself? Where should the line be drawn dividing the two areas within which the individual is free or crowd-controlled respectively? At one extreme lies complete individual freedom, such as was enjoyed or rather suffered by prehistoric man and equally backward peoples of our own day, like the now vanishing Fuegians. At the other extreme lies a complete crowd-despotism, such as that exemplified by a hive of bees, — an intolerable tyranny. Let us hear what Mr. G. S. Lee has to say about it: —

"The most perfect states are found among the social

## The Just Mean

“insects, foremost of which are to be mentioned the  
“honey-bees. This society, which man has had under  
“domestication so many thousand years that the begin-  
“ning has been forgotten, has won the admiration of the  
“world, and poets and philosophers have immortalised  
“it with their words. What could appear more perfect?  
“Each member of the society is apparently free, and each  
“labors for the common good. Truly it seems an ideal  
“state; but, to attain this ideal state, queens must kill  
“their sisters or be killed by them; thousands must be  
“relegated to ceaseless toil, and kings exist but for a day.  
“This perfect state consists only of a queen-mother and  
“thousands of sexless slaves. All exist, not for their  
“own individual pleasure, improvement or happiness, but  
“only for the community. If socialists will study this  
“and other examples of states which have resolutely  
“worked out the social problems to a successful finish they  
“will perhaps get an inkling of how far off is the realisa-  
“tion of all Utopias.”

Neither of these extremes will men tolerate. Unsocial-  
ised they cannot attain civilisation; over-socialised they  
cannot attain individual development. Where is the  
line to be drawn?

The question presses for consideration. I am not re-  
ferring to the actual period of war, because in war-time  
the nation is admittedly everything, the individual noth-  
ing. The last half century has been and the century  
that is to come will be compelled to consider and solve this  
problem: Where is the line to be drawn between individu-  
alism and socialism? On that issue political parties must  
presently divide, one tending in one direction, the other

# The Crowd in Peace and War

in the other. There will be no lucid politics until that division is plainly manifest and recognised. The confused politics of the last fifteen years have been due to the fact that old party issues were dead. Almost every important social measure introduced of late has been accepted in principle by both parties, and quarrelled over in detail for the sake of keeping the parties alive by having something to quarrel about. The fundamental divergence by which the people were actually divided — the eternal opposition between the two tendencies which run to pure individualism in one direction and developed socialism in the other — this was not the dividing line between parties, for both included separate sections animated by these opposing ideals. Hence an inevitable confusion of issues and policies, and cross-currents of opinion which did not coincide with the division-lists.

Moreover, in all parties in the House of Commons of late years, the socialistic faction, by which I mean the group of men whose ideals tend in the direction of socialism, was stronger than the individualistic; and thus it came about that socialistic measures were neither properly criticised on consistent and reasoned grounds, nor were they strenuously opposed by an organised anti-socialist opposition. The criticism they met with was sporadic and disorganised. Hence socialistic measures were passed into law in a crude and in many respects unworkable form, and they consequently produced, when put into operation, about as much harm as good.

The important fact that has to be constantly borne in mind, by those who interest themselves in broad present-day political and social problems, is the enormous growth

## The Just Mean

of the crowd in power and organisation during the last hundred years. That growth is the distinguishing feature of the nineteenth century. There was never anything like it before in the history of the world, nor in fact could there have been, for the conditions that made it possible did not previously exist. The size to which a crowd can grow depends upon the certainty and ease of communication between its parts. The scientific achievements of the nineteenth century effected improved means of communication such as the world had never imagined before; and that development still continues. The civilised peoples of the world may now be said to live almost in the presence of one another. A public man, by means of the daily press, can to-day address not merely the people of a locality, or even of a nation, but civilised humanity at large. Movements consequently affect vaster aggregations of mankind than ever before. A political movement is no longer local or even national. A wave of similar political movement passes almost simultaneously over all progressive nations. Witness the world-wide extension of the temperance movement as one example.

Thus the formation and organisation of all kinds of crowds has become easy where before it was extremely difficult, and on a very large scale impossible. An overwhelming enthusiasm alone availed to set on foot the Crusades, which, from a modern point of view, were insignificant expeditions. If a similar enthusiasm existed to-day it would put the whole of Europe and America in movement on a gigantic scale. For these reasons the power and importance of all kinds of crowds are much greater to-day than ever before, and each crowd in some

# The Crowd in Peace and War

degree limits the freedom of the individuals composing it. Fashion in clothes may be cited as an instance of the extension of crowd-dominance over the individual. The crowd has always exercised dominion in this matter, but till about a century ago the power was in the hands of local crowds, and costume consequently varied from one locality to another. Now the whole western world dresses alike; and changes in fashion spread with astonishing rapidity by aid of the press and of modern commercial organisation. As the crowd changes its clothes so it changes its ideals. Waves of common interest and common emotion similarly spread, and each of them as it passes helps to unify the civilisation of that mass of mankind which is within the area subjected to modern scientific methods and ideas. Large parts of the population of Asia and Africa are still outside the pale, but every decade sees the western ideal more and more dominant.

This growth in the power of the crowd at the expense of the individual has produced many important changes in the point of view, not only of the public, but of individuals. "Half a century ago," wrote Mazzini, "all the "boldest and most innovating theories sought, in the "organisation of societies, guarantees for free individual "action; the State was in their eyes only the power of "all directed to the support of the rights of each." That must for ever remain one of the chief functions of a healthy state. Of late years, however, it has tended to be overlooked, and unless that tendency be arrested tyranny must follow. "We thirst for unity," continues Mazzini, "we seek it in a new and larger expression of "mutual responsibility of all men towards each other, —



## The Just Mean

“the indissoluble co-partnery of all generations and all individuals in the human race. . . . We seek the harmony and meaning of the worth of individuals in a comprehensive view of the collective whole. Such is the tendency of the present times, and whosoever does not labour in accordance with it, necessarily remains behind.” Collective Duty has in fact become a leading modern ideal, that is to say the submission of the individual to some collective aim, which may involve the subordination of his own development to the development or prosperity of some crowd.

It all sounds very fine and is superficially attractive. The most commonplace orator can grow eloquent about it, and almost any assemblage of people can be made to go wild with applause at the glib expression of this kind of sentimentality. But behind all this crowd-enthusiasm lurks the hideous demon of despotism. The gilded surface of *ce qu'on voit* hides the grimy disillusionments that reside in *ce qu'on ne voit pas*. Cheap sympathy for the so-called unfortunate or unfit, as a class, is so easy to feel. One can swell with emotion as one votes some one else's money to relieve it. It is quite a different thing to follow the law of Christ and be helpful, not with mere money alone, but with work and self-sacrifice and sympathy, to individual sufferers. There is little glory in that — no marching forth at the head of a shouting majority after a triumphant division, by which some sentimental though logically absurd piece of legislation has been added to the burden under which thenceforward the country has to labour.

Raise a man to a position of power, after a period of

# The Crowd in Peace and War

competitive examination in stump-speaking, during which he has been profuse in promises to the multitude of the distribution of other folk's goods amongst them; put into his hand authority over the political machine that controls the votes of a majority of the representatives of the people; it will then be easy enough for him to dictate and enforce the enactment of any measure of so-called social reform, provided it be large enough to strike the imagination and pretentious enough to engage the uncritical enthusiasm of a nation already bewitched by demagogic wiles. By such means, quite as efficiently as by German militarism, can (to wrench from its context a phrase of Mr. Asquith) "the intelligence and spontaneity of a people be fettered and hampered by the State."<sup>1</sup>

It is unnecessary here to retrace the ground, covered in a former chapter, where we dealt with the Crowd and Government. We were there led to conclude that the function of the Crowd in relation to government should mainly be to inspire a legislature, infecting it with the ideals to be pursued, and investing it with the power to give them practical and legislative form. As it is with government so is it with the general relations of an individual to the crowd. The crowd may control the emotions but should have no sway whatever over the reason of the individual. When the crowd, whether it be a religious or a political organisation or any other, attempts to control the liberty of the individual reason, that is to say the liberty of the individual to act as his reason directs (provided that in so acting he does not act in a manner contrary to what is wholesome and right

<sup>1</sup> House of Commons, 8th June, 1915.

## The Just Mean

in the spirit of the crowd to which he belongs) — when the crowd does or attempts to do this, it invades the freedom which every individual has a right to possess and enjoy.

It is of course possible for individuals to invade the proper province of the crowd and to impose by individual power — the power of great wealth, for instance — limitations upon the noble ideals and high aspirations of the crowd. In that case individualism will have gone too far. Possibly the astonishing growth of crowd-power in modern times, contemporary as it has been with the advance of science and the greatly enhanced might attainable by individuals, has been nothing more than a maintenance of the equilibrium between individualism and socialism which, it may be contended, existed before advancing science disturbed it. Certain it is that it is now possible for individuals, not as wielding the power of responsible government but merely by the acquisition or control of wealth, to attain possession of a degree of actual power over their fellow creatures such as can scarcely be paralleled in any other age. The corresponding growth of crowd-power could not perhaps be avoided. Yet the number of powerful — if you like to call them so, over-powerful — individuals whom the crowd has to protect itself against are few; but all citizens fall together under the dominion of the developed crowd and lose some of their freedom to it. Tyranny may be at hand at any moment, when its coming is least expected, and of all misfortunes that mankind can suffer, crowd-tyranny is the worst — crowd-tyranny controlling the actions of our lives and worse still controlling the freedom of our thoughts.

# The Crowd in Peace and War

Splendid indeed have been and still remain the great ideals which mankind has collectively striven for and, by striving for, has enabled to be formulated and to enter the hearts and become fabric of the conscience of all noble individuals. By crowd-forming ideals the lower masses of mankind have been and are being elevated, and by them only. The masses of humanity are not to be raised by intellectual effort, nor by science, nor by the labour of individuals; they can be elevated by the infection of fine ideals only, and to these and the crowds that have incorporated them the great advance from the beast-level to where we stand has been due. But in the heritage of the world no less precious are the noble lives, the high intellectual accomplishments, the great works, and the splendid deeds of individual men: and they, not those only who have occupied high public position and loomed large within the vision of their contemporaries, but still more the forgotten multitudes of separate and variously gifted individuals, who have followed each his own star, who have lived and laboured each under the guidance of his own reason, who have faced the world with fearless confidence, each in his own resources and powers, and who in art, in literature, in philosophy, in scientific discovery, in courageous action, or in masterful direction, have shown how beneficent may be the life of an independent human unit in effecting great results, which no crowd could either conceive or bring to fruition. Great is Mankind, but great also is Man.

οὐδὲν ἀνθρώπου δεινότερον πέλει